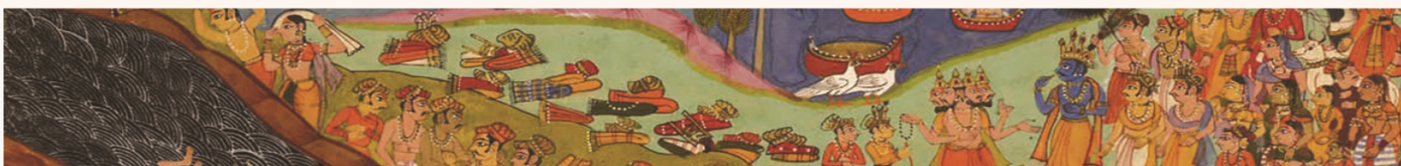
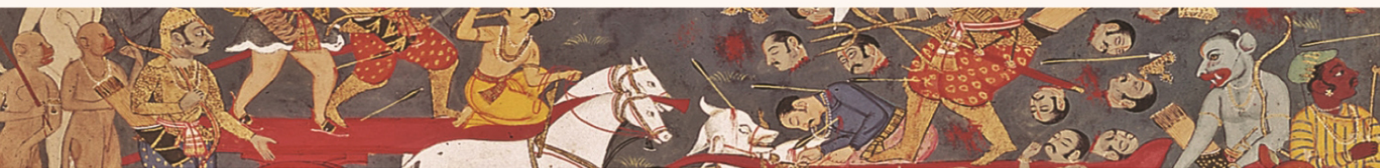
The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki

THE COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Edited by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman

THE RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI

THE RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI

The Complete English Translation

Translated by Robert P. Goldman, Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, Rosalind Lefeber, Sheldon I. Pollock, and Barend A. van Nooten

Revised and Edited by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman

PRINCETON LIBRARY OF ASIAN TRANSLATIONS

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
PRINCETON AND OXFORD

For all of those—colleagues, students, family, and friends—
without whose support and assistance the massive Rāmāyaṇa
translation project could not have been completed

yāvat sthāsyanti girayaḥ saritaś ca mahītale /
tāvad rāmāyaṇakathā lokeṣu pracariṣyati //
—*The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical Edition*, 1960–1975, 1.2.35

As long as the mountains and rivers shall endure upon the earth,
So long will the tale of the *Rāmāyaṇa* be told among the people.

Contents

Preface xi

Guide to Sanskrit Pronunciation xiii

***Part I.* INTRODUCTION**

INTRODUCTION 3

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION 44

***Part II.* THE *RĀMĀYAṆA* OF VĀLMĪKI**

1. THE *BĀLAKĀṆḌA* 51
2. THE *AYODHYĀKĀṆḌA* 130
3. THE *ARAṆYAKĀṆḌA* 264
4. THE *KIṢKINDHĀKĀṆḌA* 351
5. THE *SUNDARAKĀṆḌA* 429
6. THE *YUDDHAKĀṆḌA* 537
7. THE *UTTARAKĀṆḌA* 728

Glossary of Important Sanskrit Words, Proper Nouns, and Epithets 857

Glossary of Weapons 867

Bibliography 869

Index 873

Preface

The current volume, edited and revised by the general and associate editors of the original translation project, represents the complete text of the original Princeton University Press seven-volume translation of the Oriental Institute of Baroda critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. That translation, accompanied by extensive introductions and a dense scholarly annotation, was published serially as the flagship work in the Princeton Library of Asian Translations from 1984 to 2017.

The present volume, which includes a new general introduction and eliminates the original's extensive annotation, is intended for two audiences: the general reading public, who may be interested in gaining access to a little-known masterpiece of Asian literature, and high school and collegiate students and faculty. As discussed in detail in the introduction, the original translation, directed more toward an audience of academic specialists, has been considerably revised by Professors Goldman and Sutherland Goldman with a view toward making it more accessible to these two audiences.

Over the decades during which the original translation took form and during the period of the creation of the present one, the editors and translators incurred an immense debt of gratitude to many scholars in India and at Berkeley for their assistance. Space prevents us from naming them here, but they have been deeply thanked in the original volumes. Let us simply express our undying gratitude to Sanskrit scholar Dr. Kristi Wiley, who, through both *avatāras* of the translation, has been unstinting in her help and unequaled in her eagle eye and good sense of the original text, without which neither form would have been possible. We would also like to express our profound thanks to Ms. Janet Um for lending her knowledge of Sanskrit to and her meticulous proofreading of the final versions of the volume.

All references are to *The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical Edition*, 1960–1975.

Guide to Sanskrit Pronunciation[a]

To better appreciate the *Rāmāyaṇa*, it will be helpful for readers to have a sense of the pronunciation and prosody of the many unfamiliar Sanskrit names and terms they will find in the translation. Fortunately, although it may seem daunting at first, the pronunciation of Sanskrit is really not very difficult for English speakers. A few guidelines will serve to clarify the basic pronunciation of the sounds. English examples are based on hypothetical “dictionary” pronunciation.

Vowels

a like the *u* in “but”
ā like the *o* in “mom”
i like the *i* in “bit”
ī like the *ee* in “beet”
u like the first *u* in “suture”
ū like the *oo* in “pool”
ṛ like the *ri* in “rig”
e like the *a* in “gate”
ai somewhat like the *i* in “high”; this sound becomes a diphthong to glide slightly into the *i* vowel
o like the *o* in “rote”
ausomewhat like the *ou* of “loud” with a similar lip-rounding glide

Consonants

k like the *k* in “skate”
khlike the *k* in “Kate”
g like the *g* in “gate”
ghsomewhat like the *gh* in “doghouse”
ṅ like the *n* in “sing”

k like the *k* in “skate”
c like the *c* in “eschew”
chlike the *ch* in “chew”
j like the *j* in “jewel”
jh like the *dgeh* in “hedgehog”
ñ like the *n* in “cinch”
ṭ like the first *t* in “start”
ṭh like the first *t* in “tart”
ḍ like the *d* in “dart”
ḍhlike the *dh* in “adhere”
ṇ like the *n* in “tint”
t this sound and the five following sounds are articulated like the five preceding sounds but with the tip of the tongue touching or extending slightly between the teeth

th

d

dh

n

p like the *p* in “spin”
phlike the *p* in “pin”
b like the *b* in “bin”
bhlike the *bh* in “abhor”
m like the *m* in “mother”
y like the *y* in “yellow”
r like the *r* in “drama”
l like the *l* in “lug”
v produced generally with just the slightest contact between the upper teeth and the lower lip; slightly greater than that used for English *w* (as in “wile”) but less than that used for English *v* (as in “vile”)
ś like the *sh* in “shove”
ṣ produced with the tongue-tip further back than for *ś*, but giving a similar sound
s like the *s* in “so”
h like the *h* in “hope”
ṃ *anusvāra*, or a nasalization of the preceding vowel

p like the *p* in “spin”

ḥ *visarga*, or an aspiration of a preceding vowel pronounced almost like an echo, like an *h* followed by the short form of the preceding vowel. For example: *devaḥ*, pronounced *deva*(*ha*)

A Note on Sanskrit Prosody

Sanskrit syllables are generally classified as either heavy (*guru*) or light (*laghu*). Basically, heavy syllables are those containing a long vowel or diphthong, while light syllables contain short vowels. Additionally, syllables with short vowels are regarded as heavy when they precede a conjunct consonant, an *anusvāra*, or *visarga*. The general rule for *syllabic* stress is that the penultimate syllable receives mild stress if it is heavy (*guru*), thus *karaṇī́ya*. If the penultimate syllable is light, the stress falls on the antepenultimate syllable, regardless of its prosodic weight. Thus, the correct pronunciation for the name of Vālmīki’s poem is *Rāmā́yaṇa*.

[a] Adapted from R. Goldman and S. J. Sutherland Goldman 2019: 5–9.

Part I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

What Is the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*?*

When contemplating a reading of the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa*, it might well occur to a reader unfamiliar with the work to ask, “What is a *Rāmāyaṇa*, and who or what is Vālmīki?” If one were to be told that *Rāmāyaṇa* is the title of a famous and influential Sanskrit epic poem of ancient India, that Vālmīki is the name of its author, and that the work is in many ways similar to epic poems like the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*, one might then ask, “Why don’t we refer to these latter works as ‘The Homer *Iliad*,’ ‘The Homer *Odyssey*,’ and ‘The Virgil *Aeneid*’?” And thereby hangs a tale—or rather, many, many versions of the same tale.

The name *Rāmāyaṇa*, “Rāma’s Journey,” is actually a generic term that, over the last two and a half millennia, came to be applied, either specifically or generically, to the innumerable versions of the epic’s central story that proliferated across the vast geographical, linguistic, cultural, and religious range of southern Asia from antiquity to the present day. The collectivity of these versions in poetry, prose, song, drama, cinema, and the visual arts is sometimes referred to as the *Rāmakathā*, “The Tale of Rāma.” Thus, although specific versions of the tale, such as those found in Sanskrit and many other languages, may use the term *Rāmāyaṇa* in their titles, many others do not. Indeed, the massive diffusion of texts, art, and performance based on the Rāma story found throughout the nations of southern Asia makes the *Rāmāyaṇa*, writ large, arguably one of the world’s most popular, influential, and widely circulated tales ever told. In this it can only be compared with two works that have been equally pervasive and influential, but far less variable and religiously adaptable—the Bible and the Qur’an.

The oldest surviving version of the great tale of Rāma, and the one that is doubtless the direct or indirect source of all of the hundreds and perhaps thousands of other versions of the story, is the monumental, mid–first

millennium BCE epic poem in some twenty-five thousand Sanskrit couplets attributed to Vālmīki. In several respects this poem is also, as we shall see, unique among all versions of the tale.

In its own preface the text calls itself by three titles: *Rāma's Journey* (*rāmāyaṇam*), *The Great Tale of Sītā* (*sītāyāś caritaṃ mahat*), and *The Slaying of Paulastya* (i.e., Rāvaṇa) (*paulastyavadhaḥ*). The first title reflects the salience in the story of its hero, while the second features its heroine and the third its villain. In modernity, in order to distinguish this work from its legion of later versions, many of which are called simply *Rāmāyaṇa*, scholars and others tend to name it for its author. Thus, in keeping with Sanskrit's predilection for nominal compounds, the poem is often referred to in that language as the *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇa*, "*Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa*." In English we tend to separate the two parts of the compound: the name of the author and the name of his work.

Like other *Rāmāyaṇas*, Vālmīki's work purports to be a poetic history of events that took place on the Indian subcontinent and on the adjacent island of Laṅkā (popularly believed to be the modern nation of Sri Lanka). Indeed, along with its reputation as a great literary composition, and like its sister epic, the *Mahābhārata*, it is regarded by numerous Indian commentators, as well as by the Indian literary critical tradition and many pious Hindus today, as belonging to the genre of *itihāsa*, "historical narrative." Also like the *Mahābhārata*, but unlike most other versions of the Rāma story, Vālmīki's epic is believed to be the work of a divinely gifted *ṛṣi*, "seer," who was endowed with an infallible and omniscient vision enabling him to witness directly all the events recounted in his poem. Thus, his version of the tale is widely regarded as the first and most authentic and unfalsifiable historical account of the life of its hero, Rāma, and all the other characters—human, simian, avian, divine, and demonic—with whom his career intersects.

A unique characteristic of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is that it is almost universally revered in the Indian literary tradition as the veritable *fons et origo* of the entire genre of *kāvya*, "poetry," or what we would call *belles lettres*: texts whose purpose, among others, is to stimulate our aesthetic sensibilities. Thus, the work is widely revered as the *Ādikāvya*, "The First Poem," from which all later poetry derives, while its author is venerated as the *Ādikavi*, "The First Poet." Indeed, the poem's tale of the life of its hero, Rāma, has come down to us with a prologue in the form of a meta-narrative

about exactly how Vālmīki came to learn the story of Rāma and how he was inspired to craft it into a massive musical and poetic history. In that prologue, we read that Lord Brahmā, the creator divinity himself, inspired the sage to compose the tale of Rāma in metrical verse, "to delight the heart." In other words, in addition to its other merits, Vālmīki's magnum opus is a grand entertainment filled with emotional scenes, romantic idylls, heroic warriors, beautiful princesses, monstrous villains, comical monkeys, and cataclysmic battles. And so, along with the innumerable subsequent retellings it has inspired throughout the countries and cultures of southern Asia, the work has both delighted and edified its audiences for millennia.

But the work is not merely a literary account of a legendary hero's life and struggles. It also functions on two other critical levels, the devotional and the ethical. We learn at the very outset of the poem that, despite appearances, its protagonist is no ordinary human. Together with his three brothers, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, and Śatrughna, he is, in fact, an incarnation of one of the supreme divinities of Hinduism, Lord Viṣṇu, who takes on various earthly forms over the long, recurring cycles of cosmic time when the righteous and righteousness (*dharma*) itself are imperiled at the hands of some mighty, demonic being or beings who are too powerful for even the lesser gods to resist. Thus, the warrior prince and righteous monarch Rāma is regarded as one of the principal *avatāras*, "incarnations," of the Supreme Being and therefore an object of veneration, worship, and devotion for hundreds of millions of Hindus worldwide from deep antiquity to the present day. In this way, Vālmīki's epic poem is one of the earliest sacred texts of the Vaiṣṇava tradition of Hinduism and stands at the head of all the many Hindu versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[1] Although it has sometimes been superseded in the affection of many of Rāma's *bhaktas*, "devotees," by later, regional versions of the epic, Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* remains a central scripture for some schools of Vaiṣṇavism to this day, and most Hindus revere both the poem and the poet. Indeed, the day traditionally regarded as Vālmīki's birthday is a "restricted," or optional, holiday on the Hindu calendar.

The epic narrative is constructed as a kind of morality play, an illustrative guide to righteous behavior, in the face of the most dire challenges and ethical dilemmas. At the same time, it is a grand cautionary tale of the downfall of the unrighteous, no matter how mighty they may be.

Thus, the work, along with its role as a historical and literary text, functions as both a guide to moral and religious conduct (*dharmaśāstra*) and a political treatise on the proper exercise of kingship and governance (*nītiśāstra*). It fulfills these roles through the creation of (in some cases literally) towering figures whose characters and actions represent positive and negative exemplars for its audiences to emulate or to shun. In this way, the epic hero Rāma serves as the model for the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal warrior, and the ideal king. Thus, not only is he a god come to earth, but he is the ideal man. Other central figures serve similarly in their specific roles. The heroine, Sītā, is the ideal wife, a *pativratā*, a woman perfectly devoted to her husband for better or for worse. Lakṣmaṇa is the ideal younger brother, utterly faithful to his elder, Rāma. The monkey-hero Hanumān emerges as the very paragon of selfless devotion to one's lord. Then there is the anomalous figure of Vibhīṣaṇa, the virtuous *rākṣasa* brother of the epic's villain, who abandons his family and his people to take refuge and ally himself with Rāma.

On the "dark side," as it were, there is the monstrous, ten-headed *rākṣasa* king, Rāvaṇa, a ruthless conquistador who terrorizes all creatures, even the gods themselves. Rāvaṇa is a defiler of all sacred rites and a prolific sexual predator who rapes and abducts women throughout the three worlds until he meets his downfall at Rāma's hands. There is also Rāvaṇa's sinister and terrifying son, the sorcerer-warrior Rāvaṇi Indrajit, who, through his powers of illusion and magical rites, can make himself both invisible and invincible. Rāvaṇa's colossal younger brother is the horrifying, if almost comically grotesque, Kumbhakarṇa, who must be aroused from his perpetual sleep to wreak havoc on Rāma's army of semidivine monkeys (*vānaras*).

In opposing these sets of figures, the righteous and the unrighteous, the epic narrative establishes itself as a major episode in the grand and never-ending struggle between the forces of *dharma*, "good *or* righteousness," and the forces of *adharma*, "evil *or* unrighteousness," for control of the universe—a struggle that, as noted earlier, occasionally necessitates the divine intervention of the Supreme Being to resolve it in favor of *dharma*. In the end, once Rāma has been victorious in his battle with Rāvaṇa and his evil minions, recovered his abducted wife, and established himself on his ancestral throne, he inaugurates a millennia-long utopian kingdom, the so-

called *Rāmarājya*, “Kingdom of Rāma,” which lives on in the political imagination of India to this day. This morality play, reenacted annually across much of India in the *Rāmlīlā*, “The Play of Rāma,” a rather more cheerful popular celebration than the European Passion Play it parallels, continues to entertain and edify hundreds of millions who worship Rāma and Sītā (*Sītārām*). At the drama’s conclusion, vast crowds of devotees and onlookers celebrate as a giant effigy of the demonic Rāvaṇa, packed with fireworks, is set ablaze for a glorious celebration of the triumph of good over evil.

Vālmīki’s Epic: The Text

The original Princeton University Press translation of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* (PVR), which forms the basis of the present volume, is based, with a number of revisions and emendations, on the seven-volume critical edition of the poem produced by the scholars of the Rāmāyaṇa Department of the Oriental Institute of Baroda, India, between 1960 and 1975 under the general editorship of a series of distinguished experts in the field of Sanskrit epic studies.[2] But before we delve into the translation, it will perhaps be helpful for the reader to understand exactly what the critical edition is, how it relates to the many other published editions (and their corresponding translations) of the poem, and something of the textual history of this remarkable work.

The poem’s *upodghāta*, “prologue,” which presents an account of its creation and early performance, describes it as having been composed by the sage Vālmīki, who subsequently taught it to two of his disciples, the twin bards Lava and Kuśa, who turn out actually to be Rāma’s long-lost children. They have been living, unbeknownst to their father, in exile with their banished mother, Sītā, in the sage’s ashram. The brothers literally take their show on the road and sing the poem, with musical accompaniment, on the highways and byways of India until, as the tale goes, they present it as a command performance at their father’s court, where they are recognized as his long-lost sons.

Such is the legend. But it is not implausible that, at least in its earliest stages, the work was orally composed as a sort of bardic lay, transmitted aurally from master to disciple and performed aloud to popular audiences,

the vast majority of whom would almost certainly have been illiterate and thus unable to imbibe the work in any other way even had it been available in written form. Nonetheless, as the celebrity of the poem spread in antiquity, it would surely at an early date have entered into the rich and emerging manuscript culture of the Indian subcontinent. And it is here that problems arise with regard to our efforts to understand what the text of the poem was like in its earliest form or forms. For one thing, orally composed and performed tales, as we know from much more recent examples, may change to greater or lesser extents in different performances by the same bard and in performances by different singers, either through failures of memory or as a result of improvisation in response to different times, places, occasions, and audience reactions.[3]

Then, too, there are similar problems with manuscripts depending on the diligence and competence of the copyists. Such issues are particularly weighty in the case of the scribal transmission of Sanskrit texts in India because Sanskrit, although a highly conservative and grammatically regulated language for the most part, has never had a single principal script in which it was written, unlike, say, Greek or Latin. Thus, as the manuscript tradition of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* developed over time, the work came to be copied in a wide variety of regional scripts from all parts of India, from the Śāradā script of Kashmir to the Grantha and Malayalam scripts of the deep south and the scripts of many others in between. These various regional scripts in turn contributed to a sort of graphic game of "telephone" in which scribes copying a manuscript from one script into another for their local audiences might well make significant errors or alterations.

As a result of these factors and the very popularity of the work itself, the poem has undergone numerous and complex textual changes that have resulted in the formation of a number of primary and secondary recensions, or textual variants. Basically, there are two large recensional versions—manuscripts from northern India in northern scripts and manuscripts from southern India in southern scripts—along with many manuscripts in the widely written and printed Devanāgarī script. The textual differences between these two large recensions are significant: in a word-for-word, verse-for-verse, passage-for-passage comparison between the northern and southern versions, only about one-third of the text is textually identical in the two versions.

Even this north-south division does not fully reflect the textual variation of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. Within each major recension, there are further regional sub-recensions. Modern printed editions of the poem represent one or another of the recensions or sub-recensions. Thus, there is Gaspare Gorresio's edition of the Gauḍīya (Bengal) recension, Vishva Bandhu's "Lahore" edition of the northwestern recension, and the numerous editions of the southern recensions such as the "Kumbakonam" edition and those of the Gujarati Printing Press, the Nirnaya Sagara Press, the Gita Press, and the Venkateshwara Steam Press. All existing translations of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, with the exception of ours and the subsequent one of Bibek Debroy, are based on one or another of the existing published editions.[4] For this reason, readers familiar with other published editions or translations based on them will note that, in many places, ours is different from those they may have read and been led to believe are the "authentic" text of the epic.

Yet another factor here is the question of time and the perishability of manuscript media in South and Southeast Asia. Sanskrit manuscripts, depending on period and region, have been written on a variety of media, including prepared palm leaves, birch bark, and various forms of paper. These materials have generally had relatively short life spans in the hot and humid environment of monsoon Asia. Manuscripts succumb to mold, insects, general neglect, and even, in some cases, a form of pious destruction: religious texts like the *Rāmāyaṇa* have sometimes been consigned to bodies of water in the practice of *visarjana*, "release," of sacred images, icons, or texts.

The plethora of recensional variants and the loss of perishable manuscripts over time thus presents the scholar of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with a serious problem when it comes to understanding what the poem may have been like in its early stages. The core of the work appears to have been originally a product of the middle of the first millennium BCE, but because of the factors just mentioned, its oldest known manuscripts are dated no earlier than the twelfth or thirteenth centuries CE, leaving a period of some seventeen centuries from which we can recover virtually no written record of the poem.

This is where the critical edition of the poem comes in. Basically, what the scholars at the Oriental Institute of Baroda did was to select exemplars

from the various recensions and sub-recensions and compare them in an attempt to determine what might be the oldest recoverable readings. Using established, scientific philological principles—such as privileging text that is common to both the north and south; giving preference to the south, which gives evidence of being the older of the two recensions; and, when there is disagreement between the two recensions, rejecting passages that appear in only one recension—the Baroda scholars reconstructed an archetype of the existing manuscripts of Vālmīki's epic.[5] The final product of such a process is, of course, a text found nowhere else, but one that is nevertheless a scientific attempt to approximate, we must stress, not the original *Rāmāyaṇa*—a goal that is beyond the power of scholarship—but the archetype of the existing manuscripts, taking us perhaps to a reconstructed stage in the text's history somewhere in the medieval period. We should note that, because of the excision of verses and passages that did not meet the editorial criteria of the creators of the critical edition, this text is somewhat shorter than the other printed editions.

The Epic: Its Structure and Its Narrative

As the poem has come down to us in all of its recensions and variants, it is a very lengthy narrative account of the life of its hero, Rāma, and of those with whom he interacted during his long and often challenging career. This narrative is presented throughout in metrical Sanskrit couplets. These are overwhelmingly of the type known as *śloka* or *anuṣṭubh*, verses of thirty-two syllables divided up into four equal *pādas*, "metrical quarters," consisting of eight syllables each. This is an enormously popular meter in many genres of Sanskrit text—poetic, scientific, didactic, religious, and so on. As in the other great Sanskrit epic, the *Mahābhārata*, these verses are sometimes varied with an assortment of one or more longer poetic meters, often to mark more richly figurative passages or, as in many later poetic narratives, to mark the closure of a *sarga*, "chapter."[6]

The poem is divided into seven discrete *kāṇḍas*, "books," of varying length, which in turn are divided into a varying number of *sargas*. The chapters are numbered sequentially in each book starting from one, while each of the books has its own title, which sometimes differs in various recensions. The books are generally named for stages in the life of the epic

hero, for the locales in which the principal actions are set, or for those actions themselves. The books are:

The *Bālakāṇḍa*, “The Book of the Child”
The *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, “The Book of Ayodhyā”
The *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, “The Book of the Forest”
The *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, “The Book of Kiṣkindhā”
The *Sundarakāṇḍa*, “The Beautiful Book”
The *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, “The Book of the War”[7]
The *Uttarakāṇḍa*, “The Last Book”

The Bālakāṇḍa

The epic’s first book begins with an *upodghāta*, “prologue,” which provides a highly compressed account of the epic narrative and tells how its author came to compose the poem and, in the process, create the very genre of poetry. It also describes how the work was first transmitted and performed and provides a brief table of its contents. According to this framing narrative, the sage Vālmīki, while hosting a visit from the celebrated divine seer Nārada, asks his guest if there is any truly great, heroic, and righteous man living in their world. After a moment’s thought, the seer responds with a brief, seventy-two-verse laudatory description of Rāma, including the major events of his career and the utopian conditions that prevailed during his idyllic eleven-thousand-year reign. Although this concise and decidedly prosaic narrative makes no explicit reference to Rāma’s status as an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, it does conclude with a brief statement of the worldly, spiritual, and heavenly rewards that accrue to anyone who reads, recites, or hears the tale of the hero, an example of what is known in Sanskrit as a *phalaśruti*, “fruitful hearing,” that is regularly found at the end of Hindu religious texts.

Following Nārada’s departure, Vālmīki wanders into the woodlands to take his ritual bath. There, as he raptly watches a pair of mating *sārasa* cranes, a tribal hunter emerges from the forest and kills the male bird. In an access of compassion for the grieving female, the sage curses the hunter, the words pouring from his mouth in metrical form suitable for musical rendition and accompaniment. Upon his return to his ashram, he is visited by the creator god, Lord Brahmā, who tells him that he had granted the sage

the gifts of poetic inspiration and clairvoyance and commissions him to compose a great and moving poem about the life of Rāma, greatly expanding upon the concise version of it he had heard from Nārada. Vālmīki teaches the poem to his disciples, the twin sons of Rāma and Sītā, and the boys, acting as bards, sing it on the highways and byways of the region until, at last, they perform it before their father, King Rāma, who recognizes them as his long-lost sons and heirs.

The epic story proper begins in the fifth *sarga* of the *kāṇḍa*. It tells us of the mighty and prosperous kingdom of Kosala, whose king, the wise and powerful Daśaratha, rules from the beautiful and impregnable city of Ayodhyā. The king possesses all that a man could desire except a son and heir. On the advice of his ministers, and with the somewhat obscure intervention of the legendary sage Ṛśyaśṛṅga, the king performs a pair of sacrifices, as a consequence of which four splendid sons are born to him by his three principal wives. These sons, Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, and Śatrughna, we are given to understand, are infused with varying portions of the essence of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, who, in response to a plea from the gods, has agreed to be born as a man in order to destroy a violent and otherwise invincible demon, the powerful king of the *rākṣasas*, Rāvaṇa. To assist him in this vital mission, the vedic gods also incarnate themselves in the form of immensely powerful monkeys, gifted with human speech and able to take on any form at will. The mighty ten-headed *rākṣasa* has long been oppressing and assaulting the gods and holy sages with impunity, for, by virtue of a boon that he has received through his austerities from Lord Brahmā, he is invulnerable to all supernatural beings. This last point is critical to our understanding of Vālmīki's version of the Rāma story and it is why, unlike in many later, more floridly devotional versions of the tale, Viṣṇu must not only take on the appearance of a man to accomplish his mission but also remain essentially ignorant of his own true, divine nature, so as not to violate Brahmā's boon.

Daśaratha's sons pass a pleasant and uneventful childhood, which the poet glosses over in a few brief couplets. There we learn that the four brothers basically divide themselves into two pairs, the foremost being Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, with Bharata and Śatrughna forming a somewhat secondary pair. In each pair, the older brother is dominant while the younger functions largely as a sort of esquire, as it were, to his elder.

One day, however, when the princes are still mere adolescents, the powerful and irascible sage Viśvāmitra arrives at court and asks the king to lend him his eldest and favorite son, Rāma, for the task of destroying a pair of demons, the *rākṣasas* Mārīca and Subāhu, who have been harassing his ashram and disrupting his vedic sacrifices. With great reluctance, and only out of fear of the sage's curse, the doting king permits Rāma to go. Then, accompanied by the sage and his inseparable companion, his younger brother Lakṣmaṇa, the prince sets out for the sage's ashram. On their journey, Rāma is told—in response to his questions—a number of stories from Indian mythology that are associated with the sites through which the party passes. At one point, on the orders of the sage, Rāma somewhat hesitantly kills a terrifying *rākṣasa* woman (*rākṣasī*) named Tāṭakā and, as a reward for his valor, receives from the sage a set of supernatural weapon-spells. At last the princes reach the hermitage of Viśvāmitra, where, with his newly acquired weapons, Rāma puts an end to the sages' harassment by the *rākṣasas*, killing one and hurling the other, stunned, to a great distance.

But it turns out that Viśvāmitra has another plan in mind for his protégé. Rather than returning directly to Ayodhyā, he takes the brothers along with him to the city of Mithilā, where Janaka, the king of the country of Videha, is said to be in possession of a massive and mighty bow that had once belonged to the great god Lord Śiva. No earthly prince has ever been able to wield or even lift this divine weapon, and the king has set this feat as the bride-price for the hand of his beautiful foster daughter, Sītā, the daughter of the earth goddess. After arriving at Mithilā, Rāma easily lifts the bow and breaks it with a thunderous crash. Marriages are then arranged between the sons of Daśaratha and the daughters and nieces of Janaka. Prior to the ceremonies, the text provides a fifteen-chapter, well-known mini-saga of the early career of Viśvāmitra, his rivalry with the sage Vasiṣṭha, and his accomplishment, through long and fierce austerities, of the all-but-impossible feat of transforming himself from a kshatriya king into a brahman-seer.

The weddings are celebrated at Mithilā with great festivity, and the wedding party returns to Ayodhyā. On the way, Rāma meets and faces down the fierce warrior-brahman, Rāma Jāmadagnya (Paraśurāma), the legendary nemesis of the warrior class who, like Rāma himself, is regarded as an *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu. At last the brothers and their brides settle in

Ayodhyā, where they live in peace and contentment. The *kāṇḍa* thus serves as a sort of bildungsroman of the epic hero, outlining his education into traditional lore, his initiation into the secrets of supernatural weaponry, his boyhood feats, and his marriage.

The Ayodhyākāṇḍa

The second book of the epic is set, as the name suggests, mostly in the city of Ayodhyā. Here we find that, in the absence of Prince Bharata, who is away on a visit to his maternal family, Daśaratha has decided to retire from the kingship and consecrate Rāma as prince regent in his stead. The announcement of Rāma's impending consecration is greeted with general rejoicing, and elaborate preparations for the ceremony are begun. On the eve of the auspicious event, however, Kaikeyī, the middlemost of the king's three wives and his favorite, is roused to a fit of jealousy and resentment by her maidservant, Mantharā, under whose guidance she claims two boons that the king had once granted her long ago but never fulfilled. In his infatuation for the beautiful Kaikeyī, and constrained by his rigid devotion to his given word, the king, although heartbroken, accedes to her demands and orders Rāma exiled to the wilderness for fourteen years while allowing the succession to pass from him to Kaikeyī's son, Bharata.

Despite the rebellious rage of his loyal brother Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma, exhibiting the stoicism, adherence to righteousness, and filial devotion for which he is widely revered, expresses no distress upon hearing of this stroke of malign fate and prepares immediately to carry out his father's orders. Sītā resists Rāma's initial instructions to remain behind in the capital and vows to follow him into hardship and exile. Rāma gives away all of his personal wealth and, donning the garb of a forest ascetic, departs for the wilderness, accompanied only by his faithful wife, Sītā, and his devoted brother, Lakṣmaṇa. The entire population of the city is consumed with grief for the exiled prince, and the king, his cherished hopes for Rāma's consecration shattered and his beloved son banished by his own hand, dies of a broken heart.

Messengers are dispatched to summon Bharata back from his lengthy stay at the court of his uncle in Rājagṛha. But the prince indignantly refuses to profit by the scheming of Mantharā and his mother. He rejects the throne

and instead proceeds with a grand entourage to the forest in an effort to persuade Rāma to return and rule. But Rāma, determined to carry out the order of his father to the letter, refuses to return before the end of the fourteen-year period set for his exile. The brothers reach an impasse that is resolved only when Bharata agrees to govern as regent in Rāma's name. In token of Rāma's sovereignty, Bharata takes his brother's sandals to set on the throne in his stead. He vows to remain outside the capital until Rāma's return and to serve as regent from a village near the capital. Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa then abandon their pleasant mountaintop dwelling as being too close to the city and move south into the wild and *rākṣasa*-infested Daṇḍaka forest.

The *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* is noteworthy in a number of respects. For one thing, it raises ethical questions about the actions of the old king Daśaratha. For, although he is portrayed as the model of a righteous king, it appears that, as hinted at in the opening of the book and, in fact, confirmed near its end by Rāma himself, the king had once promised the royal succession to Kaikeyī's son as a prenuptial agreement. Moreover, it shows the king as subordinating his royal duty to his infatuation for the beautiful junior queen in his efforts to placate her even before she mentions the matter of his two unfulfilled boons. In this way, it constructs the old king as a kind of foil for Rāma and helps us understand the hard choices the latter will later make in service of his ideal of righteous kingship. In addition, the book gives us a certain insight into how the author understood the gendered politics of the royal women's quarters as Mantharā explains to the naive and malleable Kaikeyī how her status as the king's favorite will come to haunt her should her rival Kausalyā become queen mother upon the consecration of Rāma.

The Araṇyakāṇḍa

The epic's third book recounts the dramatic events that occur during the long years of Rāma's exile in the forest (*araṇya*). The prince and his two companions have now pushed on into the Daṇḍaka forest, a wilderness peopled only by pious ascetics and fierce *rākṣasas*. The former appeal to Rāma to protect them from the depredations of the latter, and he promises to do so. Near the beginning of the book, Sītā is briefly carried off by a

rākṣasa called Virādha in an episode that prefigures her later abduction by Rāvaṇa, the central event of the book and the pivotal episode of the epic.

While the three are dwelling peacefully in the lovely woodlands of Pañcavaṭī, they are visited by a *rākṣasa* woman, Śūrpaṇakhā, the sister of the *rākṣasa* lord, Rāvaṇa. She attempts to seduce first Rāma and then Lakṣmaṇa, but failing in this, she tries to kill Sītā. The *rākṣasa* woman is stopped by Lakṣmaṇa, who, acting on his elder's orders, mutilates her. She runs shrieking to one of her kinsmen, the powerful *rākṣasa* Khara, who sends a small punitive expedition of fourteen fierce *rākṣasas* against the princes. When Rāma annihilates them, Khara himself comes at the head of a large army of fourteen thousand terrible *rākṣasas*, but the hero once more exterminates his attackers. When these tidings come to the ears of Rāvaṇa, he resolves to destroy Rāma by carrying off Sītā. Enlisting the aid of the *rākṣasa* Mārīca, the *rākṣasa* whom Rāma had stunned during the *Bālakāṇḍa* battle at Viśvāmitra's ashram, the demon king comes to the Pañcavaṭī forest. There Mārīca, using the *rākṣasas*' power of shape-shifting, assumes the form of a beautiful golden deer, in order to captivate Sītā's fancy and lure Rāma far off into the woods in an effort to catch it for her. Finally, struck by Rāma's arrow, the dying *rākṣasa* imitates Rāma's voice and cries out as if in peril. At Sītā's panicky urging, Lakṣmaṇa, disobeying Rāma's strict orders to guard her, leaves her alone and follows him into the woods.

In the brothers' absence, Rāvaṇa, assuming the guise of a pious brahman mendicant, approaches Sītā and, after some increasingly inappropriate sexual comments, carries her off by force. Daśaratha's old friend, the vulture Jaṭāyus, attempts to save her, but after a fierce aerial battle, he falls, mortally wounded. Sītā is carried off to Rāvaṇa's island fortress of Laṅkā where she is kept under a heavy guard of fierce and bloodthirsty *rākṣasa* women.

Meanwhile, upon discovering the loss of Sītā, Rāma laments wildly and, maddened by grief, wanders through the forest, vainly searching for her and threatening the plants and animals if they do not return her to him. At length, pacified by Lakṣmaṇa, and, after meeting several beings who have been cursed to become *rākṣasas*, he is directed to the monkey prince Sugrīva at Lake Pampā. This brings the *Araṇyakāṇḍa* to a close.

In addition to its narrative centrality, the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, like the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* that follows it, has a number of passages of great poetic beauty in which the seasonal changes in the forest are described. Further, as has been noted by several scholars, it differs sharply from the preceding book in leaving the relatively realistic world of political intrigue in Ayodhyā for an enchanted forest of talking birds, flying monkeys, and fearsome *rākṣasas* with magical powers.

The Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa

The fourth book of the epic is set largely in and around the monkey (*vānara*) citadel of Kiṣkindhā and continues the somewhat fairy-tale-like atmosphere of the preceding book. Searching in the forest for Sītā, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa meet the son of the wind god, Hanumān, the greatest of monkey heroes and an adherent of Sugrīva, the banished pretender to the throne of Kiṣkindhā. Upon meeting Rāma, Sugrīva tells him a curious tale of his rivalry and conflict with his elder brother, the monkey king Vālin, and his own banishment by the latter. He and Rāma conclude a pact according to which the latter is to help the former kill the more powerful Vālin and take both his throne and his queen. In return for this, Sugrīva agrees to aid Rāma in his search for the abducted princess.

Accordingly, Rāma shoots Vālin from ambush while the latter is engaged in hand-to-hand combat with Sugrīva. Finally, after much delay, procrastination, and threats from Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva musters his monkey warriors and sends them out in the four directions to scour the earth in search of Sītā. The southern expedition, under the leadership of Vālin's son, Añgada, and Hanumān, has several strange adventures, including a sojourn in an enchanted underground realm. Finally, having failed in their quest, the southern party is ashamed and fearful of returning to Sugrīva empty-handed. They resolve to fast to death but are rescued from this fate by the appearance of the aged vulture Saṃpāti, elder brother of the slain vulture Jaṭāyus, who tells them of Sītā's confinement across the sea in Lañkā. The monkeys discuss what is to be done, and in the end, Hanumān, the only monkey powerful enough to leap across the ocean, volunteers to do so in search of the princess.

The book has given rise to a continuing controversy within the receptive community of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in that the tradition has expressed ambivalent feelings about the way Rāma killed Vālin from ambush while the monkey was engaged in a hand-to-hand battle with his brother Sugrīva. The issue is first argued out between the hero and the dying monkey in the text itself and continues to this day to be discussed in ephemeral texts on the epic in one or another of its variants and in questions during religious discourses on the story. It also serves to move the ethical and moral register of the narrative from the generally strictly dharmic, or righteous, kingdom of Kosala to the rather more louche world of the monkey kingdom of Kiṣkindhā, with its fratricidal violence and sensual excess.

The Sundarakāṇḍa

The fifth book of the poem is called, for reasons that are not wholly clear, the *Sundarakāṇḍa*, "The Beautiful Book,"[8] and it is centrally concerned with a detailed, vivid, violent, and often amusing account of Hanumān's adventures in the splendid fortress city of the island Laṅkā.

After a heroic and eventful leap across the ocean, Hanumān arrives on the shores of Laṅkā. There he explores the *rākṣasas*' city and spies on Rāvaṇa. The poet's descriptions of the city and the *rākṣasa* king are colorful and often finely written, as is his description of the forlorn Sītā in captivity. Held captive in a grove of *aśoka* trees, Sītā is alternately cajoled and threatened by Rāvaṇa and the *rākṣasa* women who guard her. When Hanumān at last finds the despondent princess, he comforts her, giving her Rāma's signet ring, which Rāma had bestowed upon him to serve as a token of his bona fides. He offers to carry Sītā back to Rāma, but she refuses, reluctant to allow herself to be willingly touched by a male other than her husband, and argues that Rāma must come himself to avenge the insult of her abduction.

Hanumān then wreaks havoc in Laṅkā, destroying groves and buildings and killing many servants and soldiers of the king. At last, he allows himself to be captured by Indrajit, Rāvaṇa's fearsome son, and is brought before Rāvaṇa. After an interview during which he reviles the king, he is condemned and his tail is set afire. But the monkey escapes his bonds and, leaping from rooftop to rooftop, sets fire to the city with his tail, ensuring

that the conflagration spares both him and Sītā. Finally, the mighty monkey leaps back to the mainland and rejoins his companions. Together they make their way back to Kiṣkindhā, drunkenly raiding on the way a grove belonging to Sugrīva. Hanumān reports his adventures and the success of his mission to Rāma and Sugrīva.

The *Sundarakāṇḍa* is considered by many to be the *bīja*, "seed"—or, as we might say, the heart—of the epic poem. This is probably because it is in this book that the tragic trajectory of the narrative begins to reverse itself with Hanumān's discovery of the abducted heroine and her renewed hope of rescue and reunion with her husband. Thus, ritualized formal recitations (*parāyaṇa*) of the complete text of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* are traditionally begun with this book and not the first one, the *Bālakāṇḍa*. In some Hindu communities for which the work is a central scripture, the book is used as a prognosticative text, somewhat in the manner of the *I Ching*, and its recitation is believed to help in the solution of many worldly problems. For this reason, the book is often printed and sold separately from the epic as a whole, like the *Bhagavadgītā* of the *Mahābhārata*.

The Yuddhakāṇḍa

As its name suggests, the sixth book of the poem, the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, "The Book of War," is chiefly concerned with the war that takes place before the walls of Laṅkā between the forces of Rāma, his monkey allies, and a few defector *rākṣasas* on one side, and the *rākṣasa* hordes of Rāvaṇa on the other. The book contains elaborate descriptions of the monkey (*vānara*) forces and many detailed accounts of both single combats and mass melees between the various leading warriors and their troops. As a result, it is the longest of the poem's seven *kāṇḍas* and nearly twice the size of the next-longest.

Having received Hanumān's report on Sītā and the military defenses of Laṅkā, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa march with their simian allies to the southern coast of India. There they are joined by Rāvaṇa's renegade brother Vibhīṣaṇa, who, repelled by his brother's outrageous abduction of Sītā and unable to reason with him, has defected, with a handful of retainers, to the side of his enemies. He is accepted as an ally by Rāma and provides him with vital intelligence and assistance throughout the war.

Under the direction of their engineer Nala, the son of the divine architect, Viśvakarman, the monkeys construct a bridge across the ocean by means of which the princes and their army cross over to Laṅkā and lay siege to the city. A protracted and bloody, though far from realistic, series of battles rage, with the advantage shifting from one side to the other. After an initial encounter with Rāma, Rāvaṇa is humiliatingly dismissed by his foe and withdraws from the battlefield for a time. He then dispatches, one after another, his foremost warriors, each of whom is killed in turn by Rāma or his allies. Noteworthy among these are his gargantuan and narcoleptic brother Kumbhakarṇa and his terrifying son Rāvaṇi Indrajit, who is both a mighty warrior and a fearsome sorcerer. Finally, all his champions slain, Rāvaṇa rides forth to battle and, after a mighty and prolonged duel, Rāma finally kills him. Rāma then installs Vibhīṣaṇa on the throne of Laṅkā and sends for Sītā. But Rāma initially expresses no joy in recovering her. Instead, he abuses her verbally and refuses to take her back on the grounds that she has lived in the house of another man. Only when the princess is proved innocent of any unfaithfulness by submitting herself to a public ordeal by fire does the prince accept her.

At last, his enemy slain, his wife recovered, and his fourteen years of exile passed, Rāma returns home in Vibhīṣaṇa's flying palace, the Puṣpaka. Upon his return to Ayodhyā, Rāma relieves Bharata, who had been administering the kingdom as an ascetic during his absence, and celebrates his long-delayed royal consecration, inaugurating a millennia-long utopian reign, the famous *Rāmarājya*. In many later influential versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the tale ends here, leaving it with a "happily ever after" ending. But this is far from the case in Vālmīki's poem.

The Uttarakāṇḍa

The seventh and final book of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, entitled simply the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, "The Last Book,"[9] is more heterogeneous in its contents and controversial in its reception than any of the epic's other six books. Of the nature of an extensive epilogue, it contains three general categories of narrative material. The first category includes legends that provide the background, origins, and early careers of some of the outstanding and endlessly fascinating characters in the epic drama whose antecedents were

not fully described in the first six books. Interestingly, nearly the entire first half of the book is devoted to a lengthy account of the history and genealogy of the *rākṣasas* and the early career of Rāvaṇa and, to a much smaller extent, to an account of the childhood deeds of Hanumān. In this section many of the events of the central portion of the epic story are explained as having had their roots in encounters and curses in the distant past during Rāvaṇa's wild career of rape, conquest, and carnage.

The bulk of this portion of the text concerns Rāvaṇa's birth and early years and his many campaigns of world conquest, during which he defeats and assaults many kings, gods, sages, and demons and rapes and abducts their womenfolk. Some of the curses he incurs during his wild and violent rampage through the three worlds serve to explain a number of conditions that face him later on, during the lifetime of Rāma. First, he is cursed prenatally by his own father to be an evildoer. Subsequently Vedavatī, a brahman woman whom he molests, immolates herself, vowing to be reborn one day (as Sītā) for his destruction. After he rapes a semidivine woman, her lover curses him to die should he ever again take a woman by force. Similarly, he is cursed by the collectivity of the many women he has abducted to meet his death on account of a woman, and he is cursed by a king of the lineage of the Ikṣvākus—whom he kills—to be himself slain by a future prince (Rāma) of that lineage. Even the destruction of Rāvaṇa's hosts by powerful, semidivine monkeys is explained by a curse on the part of Lord Śiva's attendant Nandin, who, enraged at Rāvaṇa for mocking him in his simian form, curses him to that effect.

But despite his boon from Brahmā and his long string of conquests, the narrative shows that no one is ultimately invulnerable. The biography of the seemingly invincible *rākṣasa* ends with two accounts of battles in which he emerges as the loser: he is defeated and captured first by the mighty thousand-armed human king Arjuna Kārtavīrya and then also defeated by the powerful monkey king Vālin. These episodes, narrated by the sage Agastya, serve to show that even the mightiest can meet their match and to foreshadow Rāvaṇa's ultimate defeat at the hands of a "mere man," Rāma. This is all in keeping with Vālmīki's adherence to the boon of Brahmā according to which the *rākṣasa* king would be invulnerable to all supernatural beings, but not to humans or animals.

The second category of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*'s narrative material consists of a series of exemplary myths and legends that are only thematically related to the epic story and its characters. This material is largely made up of cautionary tales told to or by Rāma to illustrate the dire consequences that befall monarchs who fail to strictly uphold the duties of kingship. They are placed in the text at the points, as we discuss later, where Rāma has become prey to dejection after feeling obligated by kingly duty to exile his beloved wife, where he is contemplating a sacrifice, and when he visits the ashram of the sage Agastya. These episodes also generally serve to bolster the poem's reputation as a textbook on *rājadharma,* "royal duty,"—a kind of mirror for kings that presents its hero as the model of the ideal monarch.

The last, and in several ways the most interesting, category of material in the *Uttarakāṇḍa* directly concerns itself with episodes from the final years of Rāma, his wife, and his brothers. These episodes are interspersed among the largely cautionary tales of the second category mentioned earlier. With struggle, adversity, and sorrow seemingly behind him, Rāma settles down with Sītā to rule in peace, prosperity, and happiness. We see what looks to be the perfect end to a fairy tale or romance as Rāma and his queen begin their long-delayed rule of their utopian kingdom—the legendary, eleven-thousand-year *Rāmarājya*. But as it develops, there is yet trouble in paradise, and the joy of the hero and heroine is to be tragically brief.

After dismissing his allies in the Laṅkan war with due honors and gifts, Rāma, to his delight, learns that his beloved Sītā is pregnant. But now it suddenly comes to his attention that, despite her fire ordeal in Laṅkā, the people of Ayodhyā are grumbling that the king is corrupt in that, in his lust for the beautiful queen, he has taken back into his house a woman who has lived in the household of the lecherous Rāvaṇa. They fear that, since a king sets the moral standard for his kingdom, they too will have to put up with misbehavior on the part of their own wives.

Fearing a scandal, and in strict conformity to what he sees as the stern duty of a sovereign, Rāma, under the pretext of an excursion, banishes the queen despite her pregnancy and though he knows the spreading rumors about her are false. Abandoned in the wilderness by Lakṣmaṇa, the hapless queen is taken in and sheltered in his ashram by none other than the poet-seer Vālmīki. There she gives birth to twin sons, Lava and Kuśa, who will become the sage's disciples and the bards who will perform their master's

poetic creation, the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Rāma's separation from his beloved wife casts him into deep grief and depression, which are alleviated only through the hearing and telling of cautionary tales about the terrible fate of kings who neglect their royal duties.

During Rāma's otherwise ideal reign, two anomalous but significant events occur. First, in a kind of mini-reprise of the central theme of the epic, Rāma receives a delegation of sages from the region of the Yamunā River, who have come to complain about the depredations of a terrible and monstrous demon called Lavaṇa. Rāma deputes his youngest brother, Śatrughna, who has heretofore had almost no active role in the epic, to deal with this assault on *dharma,* "righteousness." Śatrughna sets forth and, on his journey, stays over one night in the ashram of Vālmīki—the very night when Sītā gives birth to Lava and Kuśa. He then proceeds to the Yamunā, where, after a fierce battle, he dispatches the monster and founds the prosperous city of Madhurā (Mathurā) in the region of Saurāṣṭra, where he rules as a virtuous king. After twelve years, longing to see his beloved elder brother, he returns to Ayodhyā with his army, once more staying overnight at Vālmīki's ashram. During this brief visit, he and his troops hear the *Rāmāyaṇa* beautifully sung by the twin bards. Although Śatrughna is eager to remain at his brother's side, in keeping with the tenor of the book as a guide for kings, Rāma sternly orders him to return to his kingdom to govern his people righteously.

Shortly after Śatrughna's departure, there is another troubling incident, this time in the capital city itself. A grieving brahman father arrives at Rāma's palace holding in his arms the body of his young son. This is particularly troubling as, according to the tradition—stated multiple times in the epic, and continuing to be a fundamental element of the legacy of the *Rāmāyaṇa*—the long period of Rāma's millennial reign was a true utopia. Thus, all classes of people strictly observed their proper societal duties, wives always obeyed their husbands, and there was no crime, no disease, and no natural disasters. One point that is stressed repeatedly is that in this paradisiac kingdom, no child ever predeceased its parents. In such a world, the fact that an unthinkable thing—the death of the brahman child—has occurred can only mean that some violation of the social and ritual order is taking place and that it is the responsibility of the king to remedy it. Rāma must therefore find and punish the transgressor. In this he is advised by

Nārada, the same seer who first told Vālmīki the story of Rāma. Nārada tells the king that somewhere in his realm a *śūdra*—that is, a member of the lowest of the four traditional social classes of brahmanical society—is practicing religious austerities that are exclusively reserved (during that cosmic era, the Tretā Yuga) for the members of the three higher social classes, the so-called "twice-born."

Rāma summons and mounts the Puṣpaka, the flying palace he had received from Vibhīṣaṇa, and conducts an aerial surveillance of his kingdom. Near the southern border he finds a man hanging from a tree by his feet. Questioned, the man says that he is practicing austerities with the aim of entering heaven in his earthly body. When he identifies himself as Śambūka, a *śūdra*, Rāma summarily beheads him. The moment the *śūdra* dies, the dead brahman child miraculously returns to life in Ayodhyā. The gods praise Rāma and shower him with heavenly blossoms.

Rāma then pays a brief visit to the ashram of the great sage Agastya, who had narrated the history of the *rākṣasas*, Rāvaṇa, and Hanumān earlier in the book. There Rāma hears a series of additional cautionary tales about kings and kingdoms that suffered ghastly punishments for failure to live up to the code of royal conduct. Rāma then returns to Ayodhyā. Having had a golden image of his banished wife created to serve as her surrogate in the performance of the royal sacrifices, Rāma performs a great *aśvamedha*, "horse sacrifice."

During the rite, two handsome young bards appear and begin to recite the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It turns out that these two, the twins Kuśa and Lava, are in fact the sons of Rāma and Sītā, who have been sheltered for twelve years with their mother in Vālmīki's ashram. Rāma sends for his beloved queen, intending to take her back. But despite Vālmīki's attestation of her absolute fidelity, Rāma demands that Sītā take a solemn public oath before the assembled populace. She complies, but declares that if she has indeed been faithful to her husband in word, thought, and deed, Mādhavī, the earth goddess, her mother, should receive her. As the ground opens, the goddess emerges on a bejeweled throne, places her long-suffering daughter beside her, and vanishes into the earth.

Consumed by an inconsolable grief, Rāma performs sacrifices and rules for many years and sends his brothers out to conquer kingdoms for their sons. At last, urged by a messenger of the gods to resume his true heavenly

form as Lord Viṣṇu, he is forced to banish Lakṣmaṇa, who abandons his earthly body in the Sarayū River. Rāma then divides his own kingdom between his sons and, followed by the inhabitants of Ayodhyā and most of his erstwhile allies, enters the waters of the Sarayū and returns to his heavenly abode. These events bring to a close both the book and the epic.

There are some features of the *Uttarakāṇḍa* that set it apart from the other books of the poem. For one thing, much of the narrative focuses on figures other than Rāma and is narrated only indirectly by Vālmīki, being placed in the mouths of other figures such as Agastya. Scholars of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have also noted that much of the text shows linguistic and rhetorical differences from the rest of the poem, especially books 2 through 6, while some have even argued that the entire book is a later addition to the work and that the "original" poem ended with the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* and the consecration of Rāma. This is a complex issue, and we will not go into the details of the arguments here.[10]

The philological issue aside, there is another reason that the book has been the object of controversy: virtually the only two actions that Rāma is represented as taking in the book have come to be matters of concern and contestation over the long history of the poem among particular segments of its audience, characterized by region, social class, religion, and gender. The first of these is the banishment of Sītā despite her innocence with regard to any infidelity or wrongdoing; Sītā's banishment and her fire ordeal at the end of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* have been sources of discomfort for many later authors writing on the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme, and an object of outrage on the part of modern feminists and women's rights groups. The second issue is Rāma's cold-blooded execution of the *śūdra* ascetic Śambūka, which has drawn veiled critique from poets and playwrights in the *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition and, of course, the anger of modern Dalit rights activists and progressive political groups. These responses are in harmony with social and political pushback against the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a whole by such regional political movements as the Dravidian movement in South India, especially in Tamil Nadu.

As a result of all this, many influential regional language versions of the Rāma story simply eliminate the *Uttarakāṇḍa* entirely, while even some modern translators similarly excise the book, either on philological grounds, in light of the textual issues noted here, or, in the case of some Hindu

devotees of Rāma, in their discomfort with the two episodes mentioned here and the criticism they have engendered.[11]

The Major Characters of the Rāmāyaṇa

Unlike the vast *Mahābhārata* with its large cast of ambivalent and intimately related characters, its theme of an ugly intrafamilial civil war, and its complex framing of moral and ethical ambiguities, the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a shorter, simpler tale constructed around a sharply defined binary of *dharma,* "good," and *adharma*, "evil." Correspondingly, its major characters tend to be drawn as paradigmatic examples of one or the other of this pair of opposites and are often clearly intended to serve as models for behavior that its audiences are urged either to emulate or eschew. Ignoring for the moment issues of social class, which we discuss later, the qualities of ethical and moral behavior and the culture's prized virtues of familial solidarity, discipline, and control of the senses are broadly shown—with some notable exceptions—as possessed differentially by the three species of figures who collectively make up the bulk of the epic's dramatis personae. These are the humans, the animals, and the demons. In this way, one might regard the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as something like "A Tale of Three Cities: Ayodhyā, Kiṣkindhā, and Lañkā." Let us briefly examine the principal figures belonging to these species—both those who serve as exemplary of their kind and those who go against their supposedly innate natures.

The Humans

Rāma

As the title of the poem suggests, Rāma is unquestionably the central and most compelling of the epic's characters. With the exception of his early childhood, the narrative closely documents his life from birth to death. He is "on stage," as it were, playing a significant role in the action of all of the epic's books, with the exception of the *Sundarakāṇḍa*. But even there, much of the book's discourse centers on him. The entire work is filled with passages praising his physical, mental, and emotional qualities; his virtually perfect adherence to the norms of filial piety, the warrior code (*kṣatriyadharma*), and the duties of a king (*rājadharma*); and his compassion and deference to brahmans and elders. In short, with the

exception of what are regarded in some quarters as a few ethically controversial episodes involving his treatment of his wife, his killing of the monkey king Vālin, and his execution of Śambūka, Rāma is held up as a paragon of virtue, both for Vālmīki and for his audiences down to the present day. He is, of course, one of the principal incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being, who in age after age comes to earth to rid the world of some enormous evil. But on the human plane—the one on which we, as fellow humans, are supposed to emulate him—he is chiefly admired for his disciplined act of self-sacrifice in cheerfully abandoning his right to his ancestral throne in order to preserve the truth of his father's word. His forbearance and adherence to the rules of chivalry are also evident in his strict adherence to the rules of combat even in the face of defeat and death, as well as in his willingness to spare even his monstrous archenemy, should the latter abandon his evil ways.

Rāma is rather unusual, however, when compared with the other principal incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, most of whom appear on earth for one brief moment to accomplish a single critical mission, such as the rescue of the gods, the salvation of the earth, or the salvation of the virtuous through the destruction of an evil tyrant. Once they have completed their respective missions, they return to their primordial divine form. Among the well-known standard list of the ten incarnations (*daśāvataras*), only Kṛṣṇa, the Buddha, and the two Rāmas (Rāma of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Rāma Jāmadagnya, or Paraśurāma) remain for very long periods on earth. Of the two most popular and widely worshiped incarnations, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the latter, having accomplished his two avatāric missions of killing the demonic tyrant Kaṃsa and relieving the earth of its burden of demons and demonic kings—as described in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa*, and many *purāṇas*—returns to his heavenly form only a few decades thereafter.[12] Rāma, on the other hand, having extracted, as it were, the *lokakaṇṭaka*, "the thorn of the world," Rāvaṇa, then inaugurates and rules a millennia-long kingdom of God on earth.

Sītā

There can be no doubt that Sītā, the heroine of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is its most poignant and long-suffering figure. As a consequence of her long years of generally uncomplaining hardship, captivity, suffering, and heartbreak, her

journey has captivated audiences from the moment of the epic's earliest circulation. Indeed, in terms of her centrality to the narrative, even when she is not the direct focus of the poet's attention, her wrenching reversals of fortune and her great fortitude under terrible duress make her one of the literature's most compelling figures. These are doubtless the reasons, as noted earlier, that the author proposed *The Great Tale of Sītā* (*sītāyāś caritaṃ mahat*) as a possible alternative title of his work.

Rescued from a ploughed furrow (*sītā*) as a foundling by King Janaka of Videha, Sītā grows to be the most beautiful princess in the land, one so extraordinary that only the mightiest and most valorous of princes can win her hand through a test of superhuman strength. Of note is that Sītā's prehistory is mentioned only in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. There we are told that she is the reincarnation of the pious brahman woman Vedavatī, who, in the long ago Kṛta Yuga, was sexually molested by Rāvaṇa and who, to preserve her honor, immolated herself, vowing to be reborn as the daughter of a virtuous man but not from a human womb. Vedavatī is ultimately reborn in the Tretā Yuga as Sītā for the destruction of Rāvaṇa, who had violated her.

Vālmīki's Sītā is not quite as passive and submissive as she is often thought to be in the popular imagination. She can be strongly outspoken, as, for example, when she sharply criticizes Rāma, who, upon being banished by his father, tries to persuade her to stay behind in Ayodhyā, and also when she is treated harshly either by him or by Rāvaṇa. Nonetheless, as a result of her long and patient endurance of the many hardships she faces—and especially her widely applauded and rather fierce insistence on accompanying her exiled husband into fourteen years of poverty and harsh conditions in the forest despite Rāma's initial resistance to her doing so—Sītā has come to be regarded as the model of ideal Indian wifely conduct, a *pativratā*, a woman completely devoted to following her husband no matter what fate may allot him.

Lakṣmaṇa

One of the twin sons of King Daśaratha's junior-most wife, Sumitrā, Lakṣmaṇa has long stood as a prime exemplar of a particular type of idealized behavior that is expected of a younger brother with regard to his elder. From childhood onward, he serves as Rāma's inseparable companion. In fact, it appears that his relation to his elder as a kind of esquire is

mirrored in the relationship of his much less foregrounded twin, Śatrughna, to the second eldest of the four brothers and co-*avatāras*, Bharata. Vālmīki describes Lakṣmaṇa as "a second life breath" outside Rāma's body and observes that without him by his side Rāma could neither sleep nor eat.[13]

Thus, it is virtually axiomatic that Lakṣmaṇa will accompany and assist Rāma in his long exile and in the hard-fought battles with the *rākṣasas* where he distinguishes himself as a formidable warrior, slaying the most dangerous and fearsome of their demonic foes, Rāvaṇi Indrajit, Rāvaṇa's son. It is particularly noteworthy that his devoted service to Rāma and Sītā is highlighted by the southern textual tradition's emphasis on his dogged refusal to gaze on the body of his sister-in-law, as demonstrated several times by his asseveration that during all their long years of living closely together he has never raised his eyes above Sītā's feet.[14]

Rāma's powerful emotional bond with Lakṣmaṇa is made apparent in the epic by the depictions of his extravagant grief when he believes that his brother has been mortally wounded in battle. In the end, Lakṣmaṇa sacrifices his life for the well-being of his beloved brother and the salvation of his family, becoming the only one of Rāma's brothers to precede him in returning to their common divine source, Lord Viṣṇu.

Lakṣmaṇa also serves as a kind of emotional foil for his brother, showing a fiery and rebellious spirit where Rāma is calm and self-controlled, and acting as a calming and encouraging influence on those few occasions when his brother gives way to rage or despair.

Bharata

The son of Daśaratha's favorite, his middle wife, Kaikeyī, Bharata presents another aspect of the idealized younger brother. The natural rival of his brother and the intended beneficiary of the scheme of Kaikeyī and her maid Mantharā to make him prince regent in place of Rāma, Bharata refuses to accept his consecration. Instead, he implores Rāma to return and rule despite the reluctant command of their father. When Rāma denies his request, Bharata vows to serve only as regent in his brother's name. He places Rāma's sandals on the throne as a symbol of his brother's authority and lives an extremely ascetic life outside the capital during the fourteen years of Rāma's exile. In so doing, he serves as a model of both Rāma's self-sacrifice and Lakṣmaṇa's fraternal devotion.

Śatrughna
The youngest of the four sons of Daśaratha who incarnate, to differing degrees, the divine essence of Lord Viṣṇu, Śatrughna has only a relatively minimal role in the epic drama. In his devotion to his older brother Bharata and in the way he serves as that brother's emotional foil, he mirrors the relationship of his twin, Lakṣmaṇa, to Rāma. This is evident when, returning to Ayodhyā with his brother to find his father dead and Rāma exiled as a result of the plot of Mantharā and Kaikeyī, Śatrughna physically assaults the maidservant until Bharata orders him to desist, reminding him of Rāma's disapproval of such conduct. Śatrughna's only significant, independent action in the poem is his slaying of the demon Lavaṇa and the founding of the city of Madhurā, as described in the poem's final book, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

Daśaratha
Although Daśaratha is depicted in the opening chapters of the poem as a grand and righteous monarch, in its second book the aged king is shown to have a fatal flaw. There we see that his sexual infatuation for his beautiful junior queen, Kaikeyī, makes him vulnerable to her wiles, so that even before she mentions the famous boons he once gave her, he vows to do anything she wants, no matter how outrageous, in order to pacify her. Later in the same book, we learn from the lips of Rāma himself that the king had actually promised the royal succession to a son of Kaikeyī as part of a prenuptial agreement with her father. This is a promise that he breaks in order to consecrate Rāma while Bharata is away from the capital.

In this way, Daśaratha serves as a foil for his ultra-righteous eldest son Rāma, and the old king's flaws may be seen as explaining the latter's almost obsessive concern with maintaining his reputation for incorruptibility, which leads to his harsh treatment of Sītā in the *Yuddha*- and *Uttarakāṇḍas*.

Kausalyā
Kausalyā, Daśaratha's chief queen and Rāma's mother, is portrayed as an ideal maternal figure: ascetic, pious, and utterly devoted to her son and her husband. But as the narrative makes clear, she no longer excites the king's passion, and so he devotes himself to her younger rival, with catastrophic results. When she learns of her son's sudden reversal of fortune, she vows, against the cultural norm of the devoted wife (*pativratā*), to follow her

beloved son into exile, only abandoning her plan when Rāma reminds her of her wifely duty.

Kaikeyī

The story of Daśaratha's bewitching but ultimately treacherous junior wife serves as one of the traditional Indian patriarchy's cautionary tales about the seductive and corrupting influence of women. Initially portrayed as an innocent and trusting young woman delighted to learn of the impending consecration of her senior wife Kausalyā's son, Kaikeyī is easily persuaded by her cunning maidservant, Mantharā, of the danger to her and her own son should Rāma be inaugurated as prince regent. She then allows herself to be manipulated into using her feminine wiles, as well as some unfulfilled vows of her husband, to force him to order the banishment of Rāma and the inauguration of Bharata in his stead. Although she appears to be quickly rehabilitated in the epic, she remains in the popular imagination a prime example of the shrewish wife who betrays and ultimately causes the death of her husband.

The Animals

It will be recalled that a particular feature of the Rāma legend is that the story's archvillain, Rāvaṇa, had received a boon of invulnerability from all the various races of supernatural beings. He remained, however, vulnerable to "lower" beings, that is to say, humans and animals. It is for this reason (as well as the curse of Nandin) that, during the course of his campaign against Rāvaṇa, Rāma's principal allies, apart from his brother Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa's renegade brother Vibhīṣaṇa, are a vast horde of semidivine and partially civilized monkeys (*vānaras*).

The sometimes fairy-tale-like tenor of the poem also allows a few birds to enter the plot on specific occasions to assist Rāma. These include the great vulture Jaṭāyus, an old friend and ally of the Kosalan court who, in the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, gives his life in a vain attempt to rescue Sītā from the clutches of Rāvaṇa and who gives Rāma some information about the abduction; and Jaṭāyus's older brother, Saṃpāti, who tells the monkeys' southern search party where Rāvaṇa has taken Sītā. Also, at one point in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, when both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa have been rendered *hors de combat* through the power of Indrajit's sinister serpent-weapons, the divine

bird Garuḍa makes an appearance as a sort of *avis ex machina* to drive away the snakes, whose nemesis he is.

But aside from the boon of Rāvaṇa and the entertainment value of having the sometimes fearsome and sometimes comical monkeys as Rāma's often erratic sidekicks, there is, it seems, a higher thematic value in the introduction of the alternately valorous and cowardly simians. For the monkey kingdom of Kiṣkindhā represents a contrast to the predominantly righteous world of Ayodhyā, with its supremely deferential and self-disciplined heroes like Rāma, Bharata, and Lakṣmaṇa, who always subordinate their personal interests and desires to their sense of duty, righteousness, and familial harmony. By way of contrast, in the kingdom of the monkeys we encounter the perhaps more realistic themes of sibling rivalry, fraternal violence, and sensual excess that the poet tries to keep as far away as possible from the scions of the solar dynasty. The monkeys also occasionally exhibit cowardice in battle, fleeing from formidable *rākṣasa* foes.

Sugrīva

Sugrīva is a critical figure in the epic story. Without his assistance Rāma would have been hard-pressed to locate his abducted wife and would have found it virtually impossible to recruit a force capable of confronting the supernaturally powerful and heavily armed forces of Rāvaṇa. Nonetheless, as an epic hero, Sugrīva is portrayed as cruel, impetuous, self-serving, somewhat cowardly, and something of a libertine.

Banished by his elder and more powerful brother, the monkey king Vālin, Sugrīva is forced to cower on a secure hilltop with only a small coterie of loyalists. When Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, searching for the abducted Sītā, come near, he is terrified and sends his counselor Hanumān in disguise to see who they are and what they want. After hearing Rāma's story, Sugrīva sees an opportunity to dispose of his feared brother and seize his kingdom and his wife, who was stolen from him, he claims, by Vālin. He tells Rāma a self-serving story about how he came to be exiled when, after falsely believing his brother dead, he took over his throne and his harem, only to be roughly handled and expelled when Vālin returned. Sugrīva forges a pact with Rāma to the effect that if the prince will kill his mighty elder brother for him and place him on the throne, he will place the vast

hordes of monkeys, whom he will then command, at Rāma’s service. He will then order the monkeys to scour the world for the abducted Sītā and to assist in the campaign to defeat her abductor and bring her back. To fulfill his part of the bargain Rāma instructs Sugrīva to challenge his brother to a single combat, during which Rāma will shoot Vālin from ambush. The brothers fight and Sugrīva is beaten, but Rāma, claiming that he could not tell the two apart, refrains from acting. He then equips Sugrīva with a floral garland to distinguish him from his brother. As the brothers fight a second time, Rāma mortally wounds Vālin. He then engages in a debate with the dying monkey in an effort to justify his action.

Because of his troops’ inability to move freely during the rainy season, Sugrīva is unable to carry out his part of the agreement until the autumn. However, even when the rains have ceased and the roads are passable, he shows no inclination to discharge his obligation, instead immersing himself in the sybaritic pleasures of sex, food, and drink. Finally, his patience exhausted, Rāma sends Lakṣmaṇa to remind the monkey, under threat of death, to rouse himself to action and fulfill his sworn oath. Only then does Sugrīva send out search parties and, once Sītā has been located, muster the simian hosts for battle. We learn that the somewhat undisciplined monkey is also cruel: when his southern search party, thinking that they have failed, decide not to return to Kiṣkindhā, they make this choice because they fear that their master will put them to death. During the war in Laṅkā, however, Sugrīva fights valiantly and performs various heroic feats.

Vālin

This remarkable figure cannot be fully described independently of his brother and mortal enemy, Sugrīva. For it is only through Rāma’s somewhat controversial killing of this king of the monkeys that he is able to secure the promise from Sugrīva to use his control of the monkey forces, once he is installed on the throne of his dead brother, to scour the world to find the abducted princess Sītā.

But Vālin has his own history that helps us to understand Rāma’s decision to act on behalf of Sugrīva without ever meeting Vālin or hearing his side of the story of the rift between the simian brothers. That story is yet another example of the theme of violent or sublimated fraternal conflict and disinheritance of an older claimant to a throne that runs like a thread

through both the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. In this, it not only echoes the deflected succession struggle between Rāma and Bharata but foreshadows as well the parallel conflict in the royal family of the *rākṣasas* between Rāvaṇa and his younger brother Vibhīṣaṇa, which, like the conflict in Kiṣkindhā, will end only when Rāma kills the elder and installs the younger on the throne.

Vālin is not only the elder brother and, by the normative practice of primogeniture, the rightful king of the monkeys. He is also, as the son of the king of the gods, Indra, more powerful than Sugrīva, the son of Sūrya, the sun god. In fact, he is represented in the epic as one of only two individuals powerful enough to best Rāvaṇa himself in combat. At the end of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*'s lengthy account of the mighty *rākṣasa*'s victorious campaigns against human kings, supernatural beings, and even the gods themselves, Rāma inquires of the sage Agastya, who had been narrating this account, if there were no beings anywhere powerful enough to overcome the might of the ten-headed lord of the *rākṣasas*. In reply, the sage tells him of two individuals who accomplished this all-but-impossible feat. The first is the legendary thousand-armed king of Māhiṣmatī, Arjuna Kārtavīrya, who bested the *rākṣasa* in a wrestling match and made him his prisoner. The second is Vālin, who, when Rāvaṇa attempts to take him by surprise, whirls around, pinions him, and, tucking the *rākṣasa* lord in his armpit, flies to the four oceans to perform his ritual baths. In both of these stories, the vanquishers of Rāvaṇa end up forging a firm friendship with him. In the latter case, this may explain why Rāma chose to ally himself with Sugrīva instead of the far more powerful Vālin.

When Rāma finally intervenes in a battle between the monkey brothers and mortally wounds Vālin from ambush, the dying monkey rebukes him for shooting him in such a fashion, and the two hold an extensive debate on the propriety of such an attack. This goes back and forth on different grounds until Vālin acknowledges the authority of Rāma as the representative of the royal power of Kosala and dies reconciled to the justice of his death. Some hint of uneasiness with the whole proceeding may be divined from the fact that even after the consecration of Sugrīva in place of his slain elder, Rāma sees to it that the heir apparent to the monkey throne is Añgada, Vālin's son, and not any offspring of his successor.

Hanumān

Hanumān, the swift and powerful son of the wind god, is one of the towering figures in the *Rāmāyaṇa* writ large, and he is an important divinity in his own right in Hinduism and in other related Asian religious traditions. For Vālmīki and later authors on the Rāma theme, he is the ultimate devotee of Rāma and Sītā and the exemplar of what is known in Vaiṣṇava theology as *dāsyabhāva*, the emotive stance of devotional service to one's chosen divinity.

Introduced first in the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* as a clever counselor of Sugrīva, Hanumān is uniquely entrusted with Rāma's signet ring as a token of recognition when he is included in the southern search party under the leadership of Añgada, Vālin's son. As the son of the wind god, he is also the only monkey powerful enough to leap across the vast expanse of the ocean to search Lañkā for the abducted princess. Once there, he finds and comforts Sītā, causes general havoc on the island, and defeats many of Rāvaṇa's warriors. Finally, he allows himself to be captured by Indrajit so that, when dragged in front of the *rākṣasa* king, he can rebuke him. As a punishment, Hanumān's tail is set alight, but he then uses it to set fire to the city before returning to the mainland to report to Sugrīva and Rāma.

During the war, Hanumān performs many feats of valor in battle and, most iconically, twice flies from Lañkā to the Himalayas and back to fetch a mountain of healing herbs to cure and restore Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and the monkeys in general when they are wounded or struck down by the fearsome Indrajit. After the war and the consecration of Rāma, he proves himself to be the most passionate of Rāma's devotees but is denied the privilege of following his lord to the heavenly realm, as he is instructed to remain in the world as long as the *Rāmāyaṇa* continues to be sung among the people. As the epic tale remains current in its many versions until the present day, Hanumān is regarded as one of the Indian tradition's group of seven *cirajīvins*, "long-lived ones," who live on from one cosmic era to another. In addition to the account of his feats in service of Rāma, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* provides a charming account of the monkey hero's mischievous childhood.

The Lesser Monkeys

Among the hundreds of millions and even billions of monkeys that the *Rāmāyaṇa* tells us made up Rāma's expeditionary force, there are a number

who, if not of the level of significance of Sugrīva and Hanumān, still occupy specific important roles in the course of the great war. Among these are Prince Aṅgada, son of Vālin and the leader of the southern search party, who launches a solo attack on Rāvaṇa's palace; the monkey engineer and architect Nala, who designs and supervises the construction of the epic's famous bridge across the ocean, enabling the monkey army to cross over to Laṅkā; Jāmbavān, the aged king of the *ṛkṣas* (in later versions of the story he is often represented as a bear), who directs Hanumān to the Himalayas in search of medicinal herbs; and the simian physician Suṣeṇa, who similarly instructs Hanumān before his second flight to the Himalayas and who employs the herbs to save the life of the mortally wounded Lakṣmaṇa.

The Rākṣasas

As the epic action shifts from the realm of the monkeys, which, as we have seen, represents a moral universe more like the "natural," observable condition of humanity, with its power struggles, sensual excess, violence, and fraternal rivalries, to the island kingdom of Laṅkā, we see yet another and, indeed, ultimate shift in and degradation of the norms of *dharma,* "righteousness," as it is observed and practiced in Ayodhyā. Laṅkā is the kingdom of the *rākṣasas*, violent, bloodthirsty, and sexually promiscuous parodies of the ideals of Aryan culture and society that the epic seeks to preach. These are the blood-guzzling (*rudhirāśana*), night-roaming (*niśācara*) *rākṣasas* under the tyrannical rule of their king, Rāvaṇa, who is the radical opposite of Rāma and the trampler of all the norms and values of vedic-Hindu civilization.

That said, it is noteworthy that not all of the *rākṣasas* and their female counterparts, the *rākṣasa* women (*rākṣasīs*), are monolithically evil. Some of the womenfolk actually aid and support Sītā in her terror and desolation, while one of the *rākṣasa* princes comes to be revered as the epitome of righteousness and devotion to Rāma. Even the very worst of them, Rāvaṇa himself, is allowed a certain amount of justification for his evil nature and, in the end, once dead, is given a surprisingly sympathetic send-off by his enemy Rāma.

One might also keep in mind that the poet portrays two rather different categories of *rākṣasas*, both of which are seen as a menace to the society,

culture, and civilization of the Aryans. On the one hand, there are what we might think of as the aristocratic urban elite of the race, who inhabit the glittering palaces and mansions of Laṅkā and who appear to share the political and even religious norms of their human foes. These include Rāvaṇa and his relatives as well as his ministers and his generals. On the other hand, the poem also shows us an even more horrific and feral type of solitary forest *rākṣasa*—those who haunt the wilderness, gorging themselves on the flesh and blood of humans and animals that cross their path.

Rāvaṇa

Rāvaṇa, the towering and monstrous antagonist of the epic hero, is, at least in Vālmīki's portrayal, a more interesting and complex figure than the crude, brutal, and lecherous villain of countless later texts and performative media as well as in the popular imagination. Thus, in spite of his overweening arrogance, lust, and sexual predation, as well as the havoc his aggression wreaks throughout the three worlds, he is nonetheless represented in the *Sundarakāṇḍa* as a rather glorious potentate, a passionate lover, a husband mourned by his many wives, and, at one point in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, a figure who finally comes to realize the folly of his ultimate transgression. But in the grand account of his career in the epic's final book, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, we see different aspects of the character of this monstrous but fascinating antihero and are given, interestingly, some insight into its formation.

The very first things we learn about Rāvaṇa in this account take place before he is born or even conceived, and they are highly determinative of his character. Rāvaṇa's mother, Kaikasī, was the child of the powerful *rākṣasa* ascetic Sumālin. Sumālin, uninterested in negotiating a marriage for his daughter, sends the innocent girl off on her own to ask the brahman sage Viśravas, the son of the seer Pulastya and grandson of Lord Brahmā himself, to marry her. At her father's command, she approaches Viśravas although he is in a state of consecration as he performs the vedic *agnihotra* rite. The poet describes the moment as "that fearsome hour (*dāruṇā velā*)."

Viśravas determines, through his supernatural mental powers, that Kaikasī wishes to marry him and bear his children. He consents to this but warns her that, since she approached him at such a fearsome hour, she will

give birth to fearsome and cruel *rākṣasa* children. Horrified by this pronouncement, she pleads that such horrible sons would not be worthy of a descendant of Lord Brahmā, Viśravas's grandfather. The sage partially relents, promising that her youngest son alone, Vibhīṣaṇa, will be righteous and worthy of his noble lineage. Thus, in due time, Kaikasī gives birth to three sons, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, and the righteous Vibhīṣaṇa, as well as a daughter, Śūrpaṇakhā. The birth of her eldest, Rāvaṇa, is accompanied by dire omens, as recounted later by Agastya:

> After some time, Rāma, the young girl, who had been addressed in this fashion, gave birth to a horrendous and very fearsome child, who had the form of a *rākṣasa*. He had ten heads, huge fangs, and he looked like a heap of black collyrium. He had coppery lips, twenty arms, huge mouths, and hair that glowed like fire. The moment he was born, jackals, their mouths emitting flames, and other carnivorous beasts circled in a clockwise direction. The god rained down blood, and the clouds made a harsh rumbling. The sun vanished from the sky, and great meteors crashed to the ground.[15]

The episode is a curious and disturbing one in which an innocent error of timing on the part of a young girl has hideous consequences for her yet-to-be-conceived children, imposed by their own father. Thus, according to the tale, Rāvaṇa is hardly to be held wholly accountable for his evil nature, which stems largely from his mother's minor and unintentional transgression and his father's horrible and excessively cruel overreaction to it. Moreover, Rāvaṇa's parental difficulties do not end with his father's prenatal curse. Although he is cursed to be born with an inherently evil nature, it is his mother who, in her greed and ambition, goads him into a state of bitter envy and ultimately hostility toward his glorious elder half brother, Kubera, the god of wealth. In a fit of sibling rivalry, Rāvaṇa vows to equal or surpass Kubera in power and glory, and it is this mission that sets him on his course of fearsome asceticism so that he can acquire the boons that will enable him to conquer and terrorize the triple world, starting with Kubera himself.

Rāvaṇa's aggressiveness and martial exploits are legendary, and he does not hesitate to challenge any representative of masculine power and authority, whether a king, a god, a great serpent, a demon, or even supreme

deities such as Lord Śiva. And it even makes little difference to him if they are his kinsmen: he defeats and slays Kubera, and in the mad frenzy of battle he kills his brother-in-law, the *dānava* Vidyujjihva, the husband of his sister, Śūrpaṇakhā. Neither does he hesitate to molest, seduce, abduct, and rape any woman he encounters. True to his cannibalistic *rākṣasa* nature, he also does not scruple to devour a messenger and a group of great seers who have assembled for a holy sacrifice.

There is no space here to list all of Rāvaṇa's many battles, rapes, and evil deeds. But the epic is sometimes at odds with itself in its accounts of his abductions of women. For example, in the *Sundarakāṇḍa*, when the poet describes the beautiful women of the *rākṣasa*'s harem, he says that none of them had been taken against their will but had been won over by his virtues and had never previously belonged to another man. Yet in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, he is represented as having brutally ripped his women, wailing and crying, from their husbands, brothers, and fathers. They then collectively curse him to ultimately die on account of a woman as requital for his depredations.

Yet despite Rāvaṇa's lengthy career of murder, rape, and mayhem and his brutal abduction of the epic hero's beloved wife, Rāma treats him remarkably gently. Not only does he offer to spare the *rākṣasa* if he returns Sītā willingly, but during their first encounter in battle the righteous prince, seeing that his foe is tiring, merely shoots off his diadem and dismisses him from the battlefield to rest up for the next encounter. Finally, once he has slain Rāvaṇa, Rāma orders Vibhīṣaṇa to give him full funerary honors according to the vedic cremation ritual, praises him as a great warrior, and declares an almost fraternal regard for him.

It is also worth noting that, although the fearsome king of the *rākṣasas* is generally regarded as a figure inimical to and dominant over all other powerful beings in the three worlds and ultimately vulnerable to the Supreme Divinity, Viṣṇu, alone, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* records three occasions on which he is outmatched by a superior rival with whom he then forges a friendly alliance. The first and best known of these occurs when Rāvaṇa, flying across the Himalayas, finds the motion of his vehicle arrested as he tries to pass over a grove where Lord Śiva is dallying with his wife. Enraged, the *rākṣasa* tries, in his unparalleled strength, to uproot the entire mountain. Śiva, however, is amused at the *rākṣasa*'s presumption and playfully presses down on the summit with his toe, crushing his mighty

arms and causing him to utter a tremendous roar of pain. Pleased with the demon's strength and daring, and in commemoration of his mighty cry that reverberated throughout the universe, the god confers upon him the name Rāvaṇa, "He Who Makes the Worlds Reverberate with His Cries," thus replacing, for all practical purposes, the *rākṣasa*'s birth-name Daśagrīva, "Ten-necked." This episode, along with a single reference later in the book to Rāvaṇa's worship of a golden *liṅga*, is probably the inspiration for the tradition—not explicitly mentioned by Vālmīki—that Rāvaṇa was a devotee of Śiva.

Rāvaṇa also meets his match in the persons of the monkey king Vālin and the Haihaya monarch Arjuna Kārtavīrya, both of whom best him in wrestling matches and take him prisoner. Both episodes end with Rāvaṇa forming alliances with his new friends. In the former case, this may explain why Rāma forms an alliance with Sugrīva rather than with Vālin, his more powerful brother and Rāvaṇa's friend and ally.

Vibhīsaṇa

The only virtuous child of Kaikasī, Rāvaṇa's youngest brother, Vibhīṣaṇa, is one of the relatively few, but important, examples in the literature of a figure who is supposed to be evil, even demonic, by nature, but who turns out to be a paragon of virtue through first taking refuge (*śaraṇam*) with and then devoting himself to one or another of the forms of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Divinity. In this the *rākṣasa* ranks as an equal to the famous *asura* devotee, Prahlāda, who worshiped the Lord at the time of the Man-Lion (Narasiṃha) *avatāra*. Unable to tolerate his brother's evil ways and particularly his abduction and imprisonment of Sītā, Vibhīṣaṇa has the courage to speak truth to power in rebuking Rāvaṇa. This provokes a furious response: the *rākṣasa* king expels him from the court.

Vibhīṣaṇa then flies with four retainers across the sea to the southern shore of India, where Rāma and his army are encamped. He takes refuge (*śaraṇam*) at Rāma's feet, becoming, up until the present day, a paradigmatic example of salvation through this act. Once accepted, he renders many vital services to Rāma in the battle through his understanding of the military strength and defenses of Laṅkā, and especially through his innate ability to see through the many illusory devices and tricks of the *rākṣasas*. Rāma consecrates him as the king of the *rākṣasas*, even before

defeating and killing Rāvaṇa, and the grateful *rākṣasa* grants him the use of his flying palace, the Puṣpaka. In the end, like that other great devotee of Rāma, Hanumān, Vibhīṣaṇa is denied permission to follow his Lord into the heavenly world, as Rāma orders him to remain on earth to govern the unruly *rākṣasas*. In this way, Vibhīṣaṇa, like the great monkey, joins the select group of the seven immortals of Indian legend, the *cirajīvins*, "long-lived ones."

Vibhīṣaṇa's character, however, is not without a touch of ambivalence. Although he is highly regarded for his righteousness and courage in going over to Rāma's side in the war, he also earns a certain degree of censure in the Indian cultural context—which places a high premium on clan and family loyalty—for his betrayal of his own elder brother, no matter how evil he may have been. Thus, even in modernity, he is sometimes used as metaphor for a traitor to his own family, as in the Bengali saying "*ghore śotru bibhīṣon,*" "[he is] an enemy in the house, a Vibhīṣaṇa").

Kumbhakarṇa

Rāvaṇa's gargantuan brother Kumbhakarṇa is an example of Vālmīki's spectacular linking of the terrifying and comedic in a single character. He is so catastrophically voracious that the gods fear that, should he succeed in gaining additional powers through a boon for his austerities, he might literally devour the entire world. To avert this calamity, they trick him by getting the goddess of speech, Sarasvatī, to enter the giant's mouth, seize control of his vocal organs, and choose a boon for him. She chooses perpetual sleep, a boon the Creator happily confers.

During the war, when almost all of Rāvaṇa's champions have been slain, the *rākṣasa* king is forced to awaken the sleeping giant. His awakening is described in a grotesque and comically hyperbolic scene representing the extraordinary violence required to rouse the monster and the absurd amount of food and drink required to get him up and going. Once awake, he reports to his brother Rāvaṇa for his orders and, rather surprisingly, lectures him on statecraft, righteousness, and the folly of his ways. This elicits Rāvaṇa's only admission in the poem that it was a fatal error to abduct Sītā and to refuse Rāma's demand for her return. Nonetheless, as a dutiful brother, Kumbhakarṇa marches off to war and wreaks enormous havoc on the monkey army before being cut to pieces by Rāma's arrows. Even in his

death he is massively destructive, his severed head and body, in the poet's hyperbolic description, causing enormous damage as they fall.

Indrajit

The most powerful and terrifying of Rāvaṇa's allies—and indeed, his ultimate recourse other than his own immense martial power—is his son Meghanāda Rāvaṇi, who is often referred to by his nom de guerre, Indrajit, "Conqueror of Indra." This is a figure who combines the skill and strength of a superb warrior with the magical powers of a sorcerer. Indeed, when a group of seers and sages arrives to congratulate Rāma on his consecration, they remark that they regarded Indrajit as a more fearsome adversary than his father. Deriving his powers both from boons and from weapons granted him by Brahmā and through a series of dark parodies of the vedic sacrifice, he is able to capture Hanumān, bind Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in the deadly coils of his serpent-weapons, and invisibly strike down the heroic brothers and their entire army from a flying chariot. It is only when Lakṣmaṇa is able to interrupt the dark ritual that grants Indrajit his powers that the prince can finally dispatch him after a lengthy and horrific duel.

This extraordinary figure, sinister though he is, has to a certain extent captured the imagination of India, where the name Indrajit is often conferred by parents on their sons and who was made the wronged and tragic hero of his own epic poem by the nineteenth-century Bengali poet and playwright Michael Madhusudana Dutt in his epic poem the *Meghnad Badh Kāvya*, "The Killing of Meghanāda."

The Minor *Rākṣasas*

Aside from the towering figure of Rāvaṇa and some of his principal kinsmen, generals, and ministers, a number of other *rākṣasas* play various roles in the epic story from outside the Lañkan court. One group constitutes a sort of military outpost of the *rākṣasa* kingdom in the Daṇḍaka forest of the Indian peninsula. It is these *rākṣasa* forces, led by Rāvaṇa's relatives Khara, Dūṣaṇa, and Triśiras, that directly harass the holy forest sages, whom Rāma has vowed to protect. And it is they and their hosts who, seeking to avenge the mutilation of Śūrpaṇakhā, are slaughtered by Rāma. One noteworthy figure is Mārīca. Along with his brother Subāhu, Mārīca harasses the ashram of Viśvāmitra in the *Bālakāṇḍa*, thus providing the rationale for Viśvāmitra's fateful journey to Ayodhyā. His life is spared by

Rāma when his brother is slain, but he returns to the narrative in the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*. There, under the threat of death from his master Rāvaṇa, he is compelled to take on the form of the famous golden deer to lure first Rāma and then Lakṣmaṇa away from their forest home, only to be finally slain by the former.

In addition to these figures, there is also a class of grotesque, solitary *rākṣasas* who haunt the forest, gorging on game and even humans. Some of these are represented not as true *rākṣasas* by birth but rather as celestial beings who, laboring under curses, inhabit their degraded forms until they are released through death at Rāma's hands and return to their respective celestial forms. These *rākṣasas*, encountered in the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, include the monstrous Virādha, who for a brief moment seizes and tries to run off with Sītā, in a foreshadowing of her abduction by Rāvaṇa; and the deformed Kabandha, who, before his death, directs Rāma to the monkey prince Sugrīva for assistance in locating and recovering his stolen wife. The poem's final book, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, shows us another example of the solitary *rākṣasa* in the terrifying Lavaṇa, who is slain by Śatrughna.

The *Rākṣasa* Women

Like their menfolk, the *rākṣasa* women (*rākṣasīs*) show a marked diversity of character among themselves. Rāma's first test of valor is his task of killing the monstrous forest *rākṣasa* woman Tāṭakā, who blocks the path of Viśvāmitra and his young protégés. Like the other forest *rākṣasas*, she, born a beautiful *yakṣa* woman, had been transformed into a hideous monster through a curse. The text makes no mention, however, of her having been liberated from the curse by death at Rāma's hands.

The *rākṣasa* women of Laṅkā, like their male counterparts, appear to fall into two categories: the courtly and beautiful ladies of Rāvaṇa's *antaḥpuram*, the inner apartments where the palace women's quarters are located, and the grotesque working women who serve mainly as the wardresses of Sītā during her captivity in Rāvaṇa's *aśoka* grove. It should be noted here that many of Rāvaṇa's wives and consorts appear not to be *rākṣasa* women. Several times they are described as the most beautiful women of all the worlds—human, demonic, and divine—whom Rāvaṇa had abducted from their homes and families. He also has a lawful wife, his chief queen, the beautiful Mandodarī, who is an *asura* princess, duly given in

marriage by her father, the great supernatural demon architect Maya. She exhibits both jealousy over and compassion for Sītā and, on one occasion, diverts her husband from his continuing harassment of his captive. Upon the death of her husband, Mandodarī delivers a moving lament (*vilāpa*) in which she posthumously chides him for his fatal infatuation with Sītā and his evil act in abducting her.

Then there is the *rākṣasa* king's sister, the princess Śūrpaṇakhā, who, as already noted, plays a very significant role in the epic story, as her mutilation and complaint to Rāvaṇa serve as the motive for her brother's animus toward Rāma and his infatuation with Sītā. Śūrpaṇakhā is a central and popular figure in many versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*: sometimes she is depicted as a beautiful woman and sometimes—as in Vālmīki's version—as a hideous hag. As with Rāvaṇa, the *Uttarakāṇḍa* provides some of her personal history, shedding light on her sexually aggressive behavior. For one thing, like Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa, Śūrpaṇakhā is also a victim of the prenatal curse of their father, Viśravas. But less widely known is the fact that she was twice victimized. She was once a happily married woman, but during a battle with the Kālakeya *dānavas*, Rāvaṇa, in the fog of war, accidently killed her husband, the *dānava* Vidyujjihva, in a sort of "friendly fire" incident. In compensation for having made her a widow, Rāvaṇa sends her off to the Daṇḍaka forest under the care of Khara to enjoy herself, doing as she pleases without constraint. Thus, it is there, wandering about in the region, that she comes across the sylvan home of Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa and, after the fashion of the sexually unconstrained *rākṣasas*, attempts to seduce Rāma, with the well-known tragic results.

The rank-and-file *rākṣasa* women—commoners, if you will—are the women appointed to guard Sītā and try to wear her down by alternately cajoling and menacing her. They are generally represented as a group of ghastly, misshapen hags with the heads and limbs of various animals. They threaten to dismember and devour the long-suffering princess and to hold a wild, drunken feast on her *disjecta membra*. Nonetheless, some of them, acting against type, are kind and compassionate toward Sītā. Thus, the *rākṣasa* woman Saramā secretly takes Sītā's part and exposes to her the falsehood of the terrible illusions that Rāvaṇa and his minions conjure up in order to demoralize her. She even agrees to spy on Rāvaṇa's meetings with his counselors for Sītā. Then, too, and most famously, the elderly *rākṣasa*

woman Trijaṭā defends Sītā from the menacing of her peers and reports to them all a prophetic dream she has had in which she sees the triumph of Rāma and the downfall of Rāvaṇa.

Finally, one of the noteworthy characteristics of Vālmīki's rendition of the Rāma story is the compassion and humanity of the work's hero and heroine toward the *rākṣasa* men and women who have grievously wronged them. Following the death of Rāvaṇa, Rāma dispatches Hanumān to inform Sītā of her liberation. The monkey hero asks her for permission to brutally slaughter all the ghastly *rākṣasa* women who have been tormenting her. But Sītā refuses, first blaming her suffering on her own fate, then arguing that people of superior character never requite evil with evil, and, remarkably, that one ought not punish those who, like the *rākṣasa* women, were merely following their master's orders. Finally, she notes that no one is completely innocent and that one should not act out against those who are merely following their own nature, in this case that of the constitutionally savage *rākṣasas*. In this response, Sītā shows herself to share the compassionate and nonvengeful character of Rāma, who refuses to permit Lakṣmaṇa to exterminate the *rākṣasas* in violation of the rules of combat and insists on a proper vedic funeral ceremony for his fallen foe.

Vālmīki's World: The **Rāmāyaṇa** *in Its Histories*

What was the world in which the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* took shape? And what was the nature of the society in which the immortal poet imagined his hero to have lived? These are rather different questions. To try to answer them we have to keep in mind two rather different ideas of history that we may term the "etic" and the "emic," that is to say, an idea of history from an outside perspective such as is generally adopted by modern historians, archaeologists, and philologists, and an idea of history that is traditional and conforms to concepts developed within the ambient culture of the text itself.

First let us examine the etic perspective. Contemporary scholarship generally agrees, with some variations, that the earliest (and now no longer recoverable) form of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* was a product of the period between the second and third quarters of the first millennium before the Common Era. This pre-imperial period of ancient Indian history is a fascinating one in that it witnessed the rise and textualization of a number

of religious and philosophical schools, systems, and movements, several of which remain powerful forces in Indian, Asian, and world civilizations down to the present day. Noteworthy among these are the late vedic texts, particularly the *upaniṣads* and non-vedic texts such as the Sanskrit epics, which form some of the most seminal works of the emerging schools of Hindu religion and philosophy. This period also witnessed the rise and development of both the Buddhist and Jain religious movements and the composition of the early canonical texts of both.

On the religious historical level then, the epics straddle two major movements in the development of Hinduism, particularly the schools and movements that identify themselves as Vaiṣṇava. These schools practice various forms of worship of one or more manifestations of the vedic divinity Viṣṇu. It is during this period that Viṣṇu began to develop into one of the three major divinities of the Hindu pantheon, who later came to be portrayed collectively as the more or less ecumenical Trimūrti, a triad of gods, with specific roles in the history of the universe. These are Brahmā, the Creator; Viṣṇu, the Preserver; and Śiva, the Destroyer. In fact, although both of the Sanskrit epic poems of this period, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*—the latter of which includes the highly venerated episode known as the *Bhagavadgītā*—are filled with myths and stories about Brahmā and Śiva, they are essentially the oldest known Vaiṣṇava works, centered as they are on the deeds of the two great *avatāras*, "incarnations," of Viṣṇu, namely Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, respectively.

From the point of view of political history, the critical period of the emergence of these texts, vedic and non-vedic, is sometimes referred to by historians as the "*janapada* period."[16] The term *janapada*—literally, "the place of a people"—refers to a series of early state formations that characterized the middle of the first millennium BCE in which the various chieftains of the vedic Aryan clans, originally pastoral or semipastoral nomads, began to settle in regional territories along the river valleys of the subcontinent. These, it appears, were relatively ill-defined proto-states that vied with their neighbors for land, river access, and wealth, the latter being preeminently still defined in terms of livestock, particularly cattle, the interregional raiding of which was a central activity of these warrior chiefs.

As these early pastoralist chiefs and their clan followers came to rely increasingly on sedentary agriculture, the wealth and power of some of their

state formations began to increase at the expense of others. The emerging hereditary monarchs were now often aggrandized with titles like Mahārāja, “Great King,” Rājādhirāja, “King of Kings,” and even, as they conquered and absorbed weaker neighbors, Saṃrāṭ and Cakravartin, “Universal Emperor.” But in addition to the increasing military might their wealth commanded, they also depended on the spiritual power accorded them by their brahman ministers, advisers, and ritualists, particularly their *purohitas*, “household priests.” These spiritual guides conducted on their patrons’ behalf the great public royal sacrificial performances (*yajñas*) that not only served to validate their tenure of the kingship but, through such rites as the *aśvamedha* and the *rājasūya*, ritually legitimated, indeed mandated, the subjugation of their surrounding rival kingdoms.

Perhaps equally important to achieving and maintaining the grandeur and power of the kings were the court *sūtas*, “bards,” and *bandins*, “panegyrists,” the royal bards whose duties included waking the monarch each morning with songs of praise about his greatness and about the nobility and heroic deeds of his royal forebears. These bardic accounts thus constructed royal lineages (*vaṃśas*) that stretched back through generations of noble warrior kings and even to the celestial divinities themselves.

Of the various *janapadas* (and a few contemporary “republics”) of this period that are mentioned in the epics and in the Buddhist and Jain canons, two have been immortalized through the formation, spread, and success of the extended bardic poems that, no doubt, originated in the legend- and praise-songs of the early kings and their heroic ancestors. One of these took shape in Kurukṣetra, a region near the Yamunā River, whose capital, Hastinapura, was situated near the modern capital of India, New Delhi. This was the ancestral seat of the kings of the vedic clan known as the Kurus, Pauravas, or Bhāratas. Like other lineages, these kings kept alive the glory of their predecessors by using a wide variety of clan names derived from various outstanding forebears. They traced their lineage ultimately back to the vedic moon god Soma or Candra and are thus referred to collectively as the Somavaṃśa or Candravaṃśa, “Lunar Dynasty.” Their clan history, collected, edited, and revised through the centuries, became the *Bhārata*, “The Tale of the Bhāratas,” and later was expanded to extraordinary length and virtually encyclopedic contents as the *Mahābhārata*, “The Great Bhārata,” an epic so capacious that it incorporated virtually all of the

legendary and mythological narratives known to its authors and redactors as well as much spiritual and philosophic material. One of its narratives is a condensed, but still quite extensive, version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* known as the *Rāmopākhyāna*, "The Secondary Narrative of Rāma," which is recounted to its hero, Yudhiṣṭhira, in the epic's third book (*Āraṇyakaparvan*).

Some 330 miles to the southeast of Hastinapura lies the modern pilgrimage town of Ayodhyā, which, it is believed, was the capital city of the *janapada* of Kosala, a once-powerful regional kingdom until it was finally defeated and annexed by King Ajātaśatru of the emerging state of Magadha early in the fifth century BCE. The city and state were ruled in antiquity by a succession of kings who, like the Bhāratas, traced their lineage back through a long line of eponymous sage-kings such as Ikṣvāku and Raghu, all the way back to another celestial divinity, in this case the important vedic sun god, Sūrya. Thus, in contrast to the lunar line of the Kurus, the ruling House of Kosala—also known as the Raghus, Rāghavas, Ikṣvākus, and Aikṣvākas—is called the Sūryavaṃśa, "Solar Dynasty." This lineage, into which Rāma and his brothers were born, evidently enjoyed a great deal of prestige even beyond the tradition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The Buddhist tradition holds that the historical Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama, was himself born as a prince in an offshoot branch of the Ikṣvākus, while Jain authors composed a number of their own versions of the epic tale in which Rāma figures as one of the Vāsudevas—the recurring Jain heroes of each age who confront a pernicious foe, the Prativāsudeva, "Counter Vasudeva," who, in the case of the Rāma tale is, of course, Rāvaṇa.

But the tools of the modern historian of ancient India in the form of archaeology, paleography, royal edicts, travelers' accounts, and the like, do not reach much further back in time than the late *janapada* period, while the reigns of the legendary epic rulers, such as the *Mahābhārata*'s Yudhiṣṭhira and the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s Rāma, if, indeed, these are actually historical figures, would have taken place at an earlier period largely beyond the reach of such tools.

Thus, the historiographical evidence for the existence of these figures and for the succession struggles and wars in which they are represented as having taken part consists in essence of some passages in the very ancient vedic literature, later purāṇic accounts, *vaṃśāvalis*, "dynastic lists," and, of course, the epic poems themselves. So, for the modern etic historian, the

problem of the historicity of the figures and the events narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is to try to determine how much, if any, of the epic narrative is actually historical. The problem is acute in light of both the lack of reliable documentation and external support and the propensity of the epic poets to represent their stories as episodes in a never-ending cosmic conflict between the gods and the *asuras*, which is sometimes projected downward from the heavenly realm to actual earthly kingdoms in real, historical time. The issue then sometimes comes down to the attempt to view the texts as accounts of actual people and events made more dramatic and exciting through the interpolation of extraordinary, supernatural figures and phenomena and through the framing of the narratives as religious tracts. Such efforts of interpolation and framing can be understood as a means to proselytize and edify the epics' audiences by casting the works as accounts of the Supreme Divinity's periodic struggle with and triumph over the forces of *adharma*, "evil *or* unrighteousness," and as texts designed to exemplify and inculcate, hegemonically, certain normative models of behavior for their audiences. For the modern historian, it comes down to how, if at all, it is possible to separate the supernatural, the hyperbolic, and the frankly mythological elements of these tales from whatever historical core they may possess. In this way, reading the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* as history is much like reading the Old Testament as a history of the Jewish people in antiquity.

This brings us to the question of the emic reading of the epics as history. How have traditional and pious readers of the epics understood their historicity? To answer this question, and to understand the answer in its proper context, it is necessary to know something about traditional Hindu ideas about time and about what constitutes an authentic basis for writing history.

Unlike modern historians, scientists, and followers of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions, who proceed from an unquestioned premise that time is linear, running from the Creation (or "Big Bang") to the End of Days (or "Big Crunch"), the three major surviving indigenous religious systems of ancient India, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, teach, each according to its own unique system, that universal time is cyclical and has neither an absolute beginning nor a final end. The Hindu version of this belief holds that time is beginningless and endless and is measured out in

huge, recurrent cosmic cycles called *kalpas*, which are divided up in turn into lengthy periods known as *mahāyugas*, "great cosmic eras." Each *mahāyuga* is divided up into four sequential periods of time, *yugas*, "cosmic eras," which are characterized by diminishing length, diminishing *dharma*, "righteousness," and a diminishing quality of life.

Thus, for the Hindu tradition, historical events such as those narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* took place and continue to take place in specific *yugas*, as these periods recur with the returning cycles of the *mahāyugas*. Virtually all Hindu sources regard our current era as the fourth and worst of these four eras, the so-called Kali Yuga. Different texts and different teachers assign different lengths to the individual *yugas*, but a common calculation found in the *purāṇas* is that the Kali Yuga lasts for 432,000 solar years, while each of the three preceding eras in a given *mahāyuga* adds that number of years to the one that follows it, so that, collectively, a *mahāyuga* would last 4,320,000 years—a very long cycle indeed.

This chronology has significant implications for an understanding of how traditional audiences of the epics saw the placement of the tales and their characters in human history, as well as some of the differences between them. For although we might think of the events of the two epics as having taken place in roughly the same undifferentiated late vedic–early *janapada* period, the Hindu tradition places them in completely different cosmic eras and their heroes and events an astronomical number of years and a whole moral dimension apart. According to this tradition, the events narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are said to have taken place in the Tretā Yuga, the second of the recurring cycle of four *yugas*, while the events of the *Mahābhārata*, according to most calculations, occurred at the very tail end of the third era, the Dvāpara Yuga, and thus on the eve of our own age, the degenerate Kali Yuga. Such an emic reckoning therefore places the life of Rāma, the events narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the composition of the poem by Vālmīki, a contemporary of the epic hero and, in fact, an actor in the epic drama, at a minimum of some 850,000 years ago—a vastly distant point in time from us, and a time long, long before even the ancient events recounted in the *Mahābhārata*.

This chronological placement of the two epic stories and their contemporary narrators is also integrated with the Vaiṣṇava theory of the

avatāras of Lord Viṣṇu. For the principal divine incarnations depicted in the poems, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, respectively, are worshiped as the seventh and eighth earthly manifestations of the Lord, who, according to the *Bhagavadgītā*, takes birth in each *yuga*—as needed—in order to protect the virtuous and destroy the evildoers who oppress them.[17] It also serves, to some extent, to explain the generally higher moral tone—that is, the basically deontological ethics of Rāma and the central heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* when compared with the more consequentialist and even devious behavior of Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas in the *Mahābhārata*. Perhaps it also accounts for the more hyperbolic characters and events in the former epic, such as its ten-headed, twenty-armed antagonist, its flying, shape-shifting, talking monkeys, and its gargantuan ogres. It may even explain the different time frames in which the two poems operate. Thus, Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍava heroes of the *Mahābhārata* depart the earthly plane only some thirty-six years after their victory in the great Bhārata War, while Rāma is said to have ruled his kingdom for no less than eleven thousand years before he accedes to the request of the gods to abandon his earthly incarnation.

Since, as far as we can determine, the epic poets did not have the research tools that are considered essential to modern historians, and as many of the events they narrate took place far from them in both time and space, how then does the traditional view account for its belief in the authenticity of their accounts? The self-representations of both poems as historically accurate accounts are based on two claims. The first of these is that each of the legendary authors of the works is shown to be a contemporary of its epic heroes and, in fact, a participant-observer of many of the events in each work's central narrative. Both are brahmans, and in keeping with a well-established cultural trope, they are understood, as members of this social class, to be paragons of infallible truthfulness. Thus, the poems' audiences are assured that whatever events the poets recorded must have occurred exactly as they witnessed them. But there is more here at issue than the simple veracity of the epic poets as percipient witnesses. After all, the poet Vālmīki is represented as having been essentially ignorant of the character and career of Rāma until he is told the story by Nārada. So, in fact, he has no direct personal knowledge of most of the events described in the epic until Sītā is abandoned near his ashram.

The second claim concerns the unique spin, as it were, that the Indian tradition places on a theme found in other religious cultures, such as those of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. This is the claim that foundational texts are inerrant because they are the literal word of an omniscient God, or a fully inspired or enlightened human. Borrowing from the well-established tradition of the *vedas* that those texts, the corpus known as *śruti*, "what was heard," are primordial and inerrant and that they were directly revealed to the ancient seers known collectively as *ṛṣis* or *kavis*, the *itihāsas*, "epic histories," claim that same exalted status for their authors. In other words, Vālmīki and Vyāsa, the poets of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, respectively, are not merely accurate reporters of the events they witnessed with their own eyes. They are, like the vedic seers themselves, gifted with a special, heightened form of vision, a *divyacakṣus*, "divine vision," that enables them to perceive and recall everything that took place in the lives of all of the epic characters—past, present, and even future—including their inner thoughts and private conversations. In this way, the authors of the *itihāsas* function much like the omniscient narrators of the modern genre of the historical novel. Here, for example, is what the creator divinity, Brahmā, tells Vālmīki when conferring the gift of clairvoyance upon him in the prologue of the *Rāmāyaṇa*:

> You must tell the world the story of the righteous, virtuous, wise, and steadfast Rāma, just as you heard it from Nārada, the full story, public and private, of that wise man. For all that befell wise Rāma, Saumitri, the *rākṣasas*, and Vaidehī, whether in public or private, will be revealed to you, even those events of which you are ignorant. No utterance of yours in this poem shall be false. Now compose the holy story of Rāma fashioned into *ślokas* to delight the heart.[18]

On occasion, the epic poets themselves will introduce specific and minute details into their narratives that appear to lend an aura of facticity to the events they are reporting. An interesting example of this can be found in the *Mahābhārata*'s *Śāntiparvan* where Yudhiṣṭhira, grieving over the Bhārata War's massive slaughter of virtually the entire warrior class, gives an unusually precise enumeration of its total casualties. Including, one supposes, the deaths of the major elite warriors on both sides, he counts the overall losses at 1,660,020,000 dead and 24,165 missing, probably more

than the entire population of the earth at the time the epic was composed.[19] Vālmīki gives similarly detailed information and enumerations in his poem.

In effect, then, these authors—or historian-poets, if you will—are represented as able to avoid the entire issue so central to the work of modern academic historians: the location, use, and authentication of their sources. Instead, through their paranormal perception, their direct and unfalsifiable access to all of the complex events they report, and their divine inspiration, they were seen as able to render their knowledge into quasi-musical verse so as to attract, entertain, and enlighten broad audiences. Their works were then able to convey to these audiences a combination of authoritative history and an education in social, political, and spiritual *dharma*. It is this that, regardless of the major textual variations among the different recensions of these great works and the vast degree of variability in their numerous retellings, has invested the poems with their particular aura of unimpeachable authority and, in effect, sanctity, as records of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu's direct interventions in human history in the form of his principal *avatāras*, "incarnations," Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. And it is, no doubt, this extraordinary combination of a form of history that is reflective of nationalist sentiment with stirring narratives of love and war, discourses on moral and philosophical thought, charming poetry, idealization of normative social structures, and soteriological theology that has enabled these ancient works to continue to arouse strong passions even to this day.

In this connection, we should note that the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* both stand at an interesting and important juncture in the religious history of Hinduism. Although they are arguably the first works to look forward to the emerging and ultimately dominant forms of Hindu belief and practice—namely, devotion to and temple worship of a chosen or family divinity (*iṣṭadevatā*)—the world in which the poets place themselves and their casts of characters is virtually entirely that of the soon-to-be-archaic cult of ritual sacrifice (*yajña*) to the various members of the vedic pantheon. So, although the principal epic *avatāras*, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, are on several occasions lauded as earthly manifestations of the Supreme Being, their divinity is sometimes occluded and is not always recognized by all of their fellow epic characters. Indeed, as noted earlier, the divinity of Vālmīki's Rāma in particular is supposed to be obscured to all, himself included, for most of the epic narrative, so that when he has finally

achieved his mission as an *avatāra* in killing the evil Rāvaṇa and the gods descend from heaven to praise him, he expresses ignorance of his true nature, observing that he has always thought of himself as a mere man.

Because of this context, the world of the epics is heavily dominated by vedic priests and ritual participants as well as the often-overlapping category of ascetic forest hermits and *yogins*. It is a world in which it is universally believed that such individuals, whether through their ritual practices (*yajña*) or their lengthy practice of extreme austerities (*tapas*), acquire enormous supernatural powers that make them objects of both reverence and fear on the part of kings and even the gods themselves, as they can, and frequently do, unleash these powers in the form of wonderful blessings and terrible curses. The *Rāmāyaṇa* offers many examples—from the poem's very beginning, when King Daśaratha reluctantly agrees to have Rāma accompany Viśvāmitra to his ashram only when threatened by the sage with a devastating curse, to the work's very end, when Lakṣmaṇa violates an order of Rāma at great personal cost in order to avert a similarly catastrophic curse on the part of yet another irascible sage, Durvāsas.

The Aryan society of the epics was ordered along the system, first alluded to in the *vedas*, of the four social classes (*varṇas*), a hierarchical classification with the priestly class (*brāhmaṇas*) at the top, followed in descending order by the ruling warrior class (*kṣatriyas*), the mercantile and agricultural class (*vaiśyas*), and, lastly, the worker class (*śūdras*), which was dedicated to the service of the three higher social classes. With the exception of the nonhuman species—animals, gods, demons, and other supernatural beings—and one or two tribal groups that feature prominently in the narrative, the text focuses primarily on the two highest classes, the aristocracy and members of the priestly class. It is this latter class that serves the kings with their spiritual guidance and ritual services and yet, as noted earlier, possesses the power to threaten and coerce their royal patrons. Thus, many of the cautionary tales for kings that are recounted in the epic, particularly in its final book, show the dire fate that awaits even the most powerful monarchs if they offend or neglect brahman sages. As is normative in the ancient Indian tradition, membership in a specific social class is conferred by one's birth and is generally regarded as immutable within the bounds of a given lifetime, with only a few exceptions. One example is found in the *Bālakāṇḍa*'s saga of the career of Viśvāmitra, one

of the only accounts in the literature of a king elevating himself to the lofty status of a brahman-seer through extraordinary perseverance in a centuries-long course of the most severe asceticism. But the very same saga gives us an example of the opposite social trajectory: a king, Triśaṅku, is cursed by his *guru*'s sons to lose his royal status and be transformed into a *caṇḍāla*, the lowest and most degraded of outcastes.

Humans who fall outside the *varṇa* system are mentioned only occasionally. Besides King Triśaṅku, these include, notably, Queen Kaikeyī's scheming maidservant Mantharā, who manipulates her mistress into bringing about the exile of Rāma. These figures are generally held in considerably low esteem. Even Rāma's loyal subjects, shown in the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* to be willing to follow their hero into exile and, in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, to the heavenly world, are portrayed in the latter book as fickle scandalmongers as they criticize the newly consecrated king as lustful and corrupt. The only significant exceptions to this seeming disdain for commoners are to be found in the representations of the tribal chief Guha, a friend and ally of the Kosalan royal house who, with his forest tribesmen, shelters Rāma as he goes into exile and who also later assists Bharata during his mission to try to bring his brother back to rule the kingdom; and Śabarī, the servant woman of ambiguous social status who graciously welcomes Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to her departed brahman master's deserted ashram. The one member of the lowly *śūdra* class specifically identified as such in the work, the hapless, aspiring ascetic Śambūka, is summarily executed for his temerity in practicing religious penances reserved for the three higher social classes.

The Legacy of the **Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**

It would be difficult to overestimate the pervasion and influence of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and its innumerable later representations in the literary, religious, artistic, cinematic, and folkloric life of the cultures and civilizations of South and Southeast Asia. These not only span countries, languages, religions, and media but have saturated the region's cultural imagination, from the most rarified philosophical works, such as the esoteric vedantic treatise the *Yogavasiṣṭha-mahārāmāyaṇa* and the epic poem–cum–grammatical treatise the *Rāvaṇavadha* (also known as the

Bhaṭṭikāvya), to some of the most popular cultural levels one might imagine. Take, for example, a recent TV commercial for Domino's Pizza in which, during a staged performance of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as the actor playing Rāvaṇa carries off the struggling Sītā, a Domino's delivery man enters the auditorium, at which point the *rākṣasa* king drops the princess and goes for the pizza. Or consider a cartoon that appeared a few years ago in the Mumbai edition of the venerable *Times of India* that lampooned the lawsuit of a business executive whose wife had refused to accompany him when he was transferred to a posting in the remote Andaman Islands. Standing before a judge, the husband, in an effort to compel his wife to follow him on the model of Sītā, addresses the bench: "Please, Your Honour, can't she at least follow me on Twitter?"

In many ways the influence of this ancient, seminal work of Indian literature has only increased over time until, in modernity, it has come to have an unparalleled impact, along with its many subsequent versions, on Hindu religion and religiously driven Indian politics. This impact derives from a number of elements in the epic narrative, of which two are particularly salient. One is the text's repeated reference to the legendary millennia-long utopian period of Rāma's reign, the so-called *Rāmarājya*. As in many societies confronted by the stresses of the modern world, these references create a form of cultural nostalgia, a longing for and a harking back to a lost paradise imagined as recoverable, and conjure a perfect society that many Hindus believe to have existed before the stresses and humiliations of invasion, Islamic rule, British colonization, and globalization.

The concept was popularized in the early decades of the twentieth century by Mahatma Gandhi, who envisioned an independent India as a simple, village-based society with equality and justice for all Indian citizens. He tried to engage popular sentiment in such a vision by calling up the imagined social harmony implicit in the term *Rāmarājya*, whether or not it existed in historical fact, as a kingdom of God (in both the Hindu and Muslim conceptions of divinity) on earth. Thus, in a 1929 edition of his weekly *Young India*, Gandhi wrote:

> By RAMARAJYA I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ramarajya Divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For me Rama and Rahim are one

> and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and righteousness. Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ramarajya.[20]

Yet despite Gandhi's ecumenical vision, another central element of the Rāma epic is the creation of a powerful, masculine warrior hero, an incarnation of the Hindu deity Lord Viṣṇu, whose mission was to defend vedic-Hindu religion, culture, and society by ridding the earth of alien, demonic forces. With the rise of modern Hindu nationalism—around the same time that Gandhi was writing about an idealized and harmonious intercommunal Indian polity—some political actors began to focus on the idea that India's Muslims (as well as the later Christian colonialists and converts) were a hostile, invasive other in the midst of an otherwise purely dharmic Hindu society. In this view, the *Rāmarājya* came to be seen as a restoration of an original Hindu *rāṣṭra*, "state," put in place by a divine king who had accomplished the mission of purging the land of evil, exogenous forces.

In more recent years, this trend has often tended, in the words of firebrand Hindu nationalists, to homologize the country's large community of non-Hindus, most particularly Muslims, with the *rākṣasas* of the epic story. This juxtaposition has become more pronounced since the 1990s with the flaring up of the long-simmering communal dispute over a mosque in modern-day Ayodhya, which is believed by many Hindus to have been built on the ruins of a temple standing on the actual birthplace of Lord Rāma. The demolition of this mosque, the so-called Babri Masjid, by Hindu activists in 1992 led to violent riots across the country in which some two thousand people, mostly Muslims, are thought to have died.

The demand to build—or in the Hindu view, rebuild—a Rāma temple on the site has continued to roil India's religious and political life since then, and it became one of the mobilizing factors in the ascent to power, both at the state and federal levels, of the strongly Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which currently rules India. This trend was originally especially strong in the northern Hindi-speaking states where devotion to

Lord Rām—as he is portrayed in the massively popular sixteenth-century Old Hindi (Avadhī) version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Rāmcaritmānas* of the poet-saint Tulsīdās—is particularly widespread and powerful. But as the 2018 elections have shown, the vision has spread more widely to the east and south of the country. Just recently, in 2020, the Indian Supreme Court ruled that the long-desired construction of the Rāma temple could proceed, and during the summer of 2021 the prime minister ritually laid the foundation's silver bricks for the construction.

It is this religious and political centrality of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, and its many later versions in India and throughout southern Asia, that has made and continues to keep the great tale a living presence in the hearts and minds of some billion and a half people around the world today. In reading, viewing, and listening to versions of the sage's monumental epic, we not only find an uplifting and entertaining story but gain critical insight into one of the world's oldest and most fascinating civilizations.

[1] It should be noted that the immense popularity and influence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has extended to virtually all the religious cultures of Asia, many of which do not subscribe to the *avatāra* theory of the Vaiṣṇava Hindus. So, in the many Jain versions of the tale, Rāma is regarded as a virtuous Jain layman; for the Buddhists of South and Southeast Asia, he is a *bodhisattva*, a future Buddha; and for the peoples of the Malay-Indonesian world, he is portrayed as an ideal Islamic prince.

[2] Throughout the translation, despite our admiration for and gratitude to the editors and scholars who produced the Baroda critical edition for their monumental achievement, we, as translators, have occasionally found ourselves in disagreement with some of their specific choices. In these cases, we have emended the critical text in accordance with our own readings of the manuscript evidence. These emendations are particularly noticeable in the seventh book of the epic, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. There, in keeping with our reading of what we believe to be compelling manuscript evidence, we have inserted two relatively lengthy passages that were relegated to the appendices of the volume by the editor of this volume. These passages are to be found at PVR 7: 348–359 and 421–424. All these emendations are marked as such in the present edition. Readers interested in our rationale for these emendations can consult the introductions and notes to the relevant passages in the various volumes of the PVR.

[3] For the classic study of oral epic composition and transmission, see Lord 2000.

[4] Debroy 2017.

[5] For those who may be interested in the principles adopted by the editors of the critical edition, see the first volume of Bhatt 1960: xxxiv. Further information can be found in the introductions to each volume of the series.

[6] In the *Mahābhārata*, these sections are called *adhyāyas*.

[7] Manuscripts of the northern recension generally entitle the sixth book the *Laṅkākāṇḍa*, "The Book of Laṅkā."

[8] For a discussion of the name of this book, see PVR 5: 75–78.

[9] For a discussion of the name of this book, see PVR 7: 88*20 and note (p. 1179).

[10] Those interested in this issue should consult PVR 7: 54–81.

[11] For a full discussion of these issues, see our extensive introduction to the book at PVR 7: 74–113.

[12] According to the *Mahābhārata*, Kṛṣṇa abandoned his earthly form just thirty-six years after the end of the Bhārata War, the management of which constituted the second of his major avatāric missions. His incarnation ends immediately after the internecine slaughter of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas in Dvārakā. See the *Mausalaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*. The chronology is given in the first *adhyāya* of the *Mausalaparvan* (*MBh* 16.1.1). Unless otherwise noted, all references are to the *Mahābhārata: Critical Edition* (1933–1970).

[13] VR 1.17.17.

[14] PVR 4: 213, notes to 4.6.19; R. Goldman 1980: 168; and PVR 7: 885, insert passage following notes to 7.17.14.

[15] PVR 7.9.21–24.

[16] On the *janapada* period, see Thapar 2002: 137–56.

[17] *Bhagavadgītā* 4.8–9.

[18] VR 1.2.31–34 (PRV 1: 129).

[19] MBh 11.26.9–10.

daśāyutānām ayutaṃ sahasrāṇi ca viṃśatiḥ /
koṭyaḥ ṣaṣṭiś ca ṣaṭ caiva ye 'smin rājamṛdhe hatāḥ //
alakṣyāṇāṃ tu vīrāṇāṃ sahasrāṇi ca caturdaśa /
daśa cānyāni rājendra śataṃ ṣaṣṭiś ca pañca ca //

[20] Gandhi 1929: 305.

About the Translation

The translation of the critical edition of the poem presented here is, with considerable new editing and revision, the one produced by a consortium of Sanskrit scholars over the course of several decades and originally published as the flagship publication of its Princeton Library of Asian Translations by Princeton University Press between 1984 and 2017. Under the general editorship of Professor Robert Goldman, the associate editorship of Dr. Sally Sutherland Goldman, and the assistant editorship of Dr. Kristi Wiley, the individual books of the epic, listed by their dates of publication, were translated, introduced, and annotated serially as follows:

Bālakāṇḍa: By Robert P. Goldman and collaboratively annotated with Sally J. Sutherland (1984)
Ayodhyākāṇḍa and *Araṇyakāṇḍa*: By Sheldon I. Pollock (1986 and 1991)
Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa: By Rosalind Lefeber (1994)
Sundarakāṇḍa: By Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman (1996)
Yuddhakāṇḍa: By Robert P. Goldman, Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, and Barend A. van Nooten (2009)
Uttarakāṇḍa: By Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman (2017)

All translations, and especially those from a work belonging to antiquity and composed in a linguistic and cultural idiom quite different from that of those into which they are rendered, are necessarily creative works made up of a series of judgments, decisions, opinions, compromises, and, no doubt, prejudices on the part of their translators. Given its long and complex textual history, as discussed in the introduction, and its role as a seminal work for a diverse religious community, this is especially true in the case of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*.

The elaborate notes and lengthy introductions that accompany each of the seven volumes of the original Princeton *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* (PVR) have exhaustively explored the many difficulties the text presents, the extensive commentaries on it by its traditional scholiasts, the numerous modern scholarly works it has inspired, and the many translations of its various recensions in various languages. There our decisions as to how to translate every problematic issue in the text have been fully discussed in comparison with the work of earlier commentators, scholars, and translators. The original Princeton translation, and particularly its dense and technical annotation, was intended in large measure for a scholarly audience with some degree of competence in Sanskrit. The present volume, on the other hand, is intended for those who wish to read a scholarly and readable translation of the critically established text of the poem in a fairly high register of contemporary literary prose with a minimum of distraction in the form of notes and comments. We urge readers who may wish to look more deeply into the issues involved in understanding and appreciating this magnificent poem to consult the introductions and notes to the original seven volumes and look into some of the works in our list of suggested readings that follows this introduction. We should note, however, that as a result of the revision of the original translation intended to make it more accessible for general and classroom readership, some notes in the earlier work will not correspond to the wording of the current version.

One technical note should be kept in mind. The Sanskrit epic poems, like many metrical works in the language, are frequently printed in separate verses, which are commonly followed by their sequential numbers within a *sarga*, "chapter," or other section. In most manuscripts and printed editions, each *sarga* is followed by a colophon, added by the scribes and/or editors, indicating its number, signifying that it is at an end, and sometimes identifying its topic. To assist readers of the original translation who could read Sanskrit and wished to follow our rendering closely, the work was published in the same verse-by-verse format. However, to conserve space and enable the reader perhaps to get a better sense of the movement of the narrative, the present translation is printed in a continuous, paragraph-by-paragraph format, with the verse numbers indicated at the start of each paragraph.

Over the more than three decades during which this massive translation project proceeded, our thinking about various strategies of translation and issues of consistency among all the seven volumes has naturally evolved. Also, while the original version, with its dense and massive annotation, was intended in large measure for a scholarly audience already familiar with the norms of early Indian culture, literature, and society, the present volume is directed more toward a college-age and general audience with less exposure to such matters. In the absence of the annotation, this change of intended readership involved strategies for making clear in the translation itself the identity of the huge cast of divine, human, and animal characters mentioned in the great poem. They are identified in the original by a potentially confusing plethora of alternative names, including epithets indicating their genealogy or through kennings referring to some aspect of their appearance, accouterments, accomplishments, or history. Rather than rob the text of its variety in this respect by using the same, most common, or most widely familiar name for each character, we have adopted, for the most part, a somewhat hybrid approach: we juxtapose that name with a translation of the epithet in question. So, for example, the great monkey divinity Hanumān, although often identified in the text by that name, is also frequently referred to by epithets referring to his parentage. Thus, he may be called Māruti, Mārutātmaja, or Vāyusunu, all of which mean "son of the wind god." Similarly, the powerful vedic wind god, Vāyu, Hanumān's father, is frequently referred to by the epithet Pavana, literally, "the purifier." So, when as is often the case, Hanumān is identified by the epithet Pavanasuta, "the son of Pavana," we have generally translated it as "Hanumān, the son of Pavana the wind god." On the other hand, as the constantly mentioned vedic fire god Agni is frequently referred to simply as Pāvaka, which also means "the purifier," and we did not wish to confuse this figure with Vāyu, we have rendered this term normally as "Agni, the purifier." In this way we have used such expressions as "the sun, maker of day," and "the sun, bringer of light," for the kennings *divākara*, literally, "day maker," and *bhāskara*, literally, "light maker," respectively. Genealogical and geographical epithets that are not nominal compounds, such as Jānakī, "daughter of Janaka," and Vaidehī, "lady of Mithilā," both epithets of Sītā, are allowed to stand by themselves, but we have translated compound names such as Janakātmajā, "daughter of Janaka." It has not been

practicable to make such identifications for all of the epic's innumerable characters in the running translation; however, the reader can resort to the glossary of important names for the identification of characters that may not be clear from the translation alone.

Sanskrit is remarkable among all the world's languages for both its extreme polysemy, in which one word may have many different meanings, and the degree to which a large number of very different words can serve as synonyms. In the first case, the translator has to be guided by the specific context in order to determine the precise sense of a commonly used word. One example is the seminal and pervasive Indic term *dharma*, which can mean religion, duty, inherent nature, law, righteousness, character, and insignia, among others. For the most part we render it generically as "righteousness" but use other terms for it in different contexts. Another example that occurs at many places in the epic is the political term *yuvarāja*, literally, "young king." Depending on the particularities of the narrative, *yuvarāja* may refer either to an heir-apparent designated by a ruling monarch to succeed him upon his death or to a prince regent who rules a kingdom in place of a retired, but still living, king. Similarly, the ubiquitous term *astra*, "that which is thrown *or* shot," can refer, depending on the precise context, to an arrow, a dart, any missile, or, commonly, a supernatural spell that is employed to invoke the power of a supernatural agency, such as a divinity, into a missile or even an ordinary object.

Where many words have the same referent, we have tried to capture the diversity and texture of the original by providing the most common term for the target meaning in English, enhanced by a descriptive term reflecting the etymological sense of the word used. A good example is the text's diverse terminology for monkeys, creatures that occupy a central role in the epic story. The poet uses two common and basic terms for his simian characters, *kapi* and *vānara*, which we have rendered simply as "monkey." But he also uses a wide variety of descriptors and kennings to refer to monkeys in general and to specific species in particular. Our practice has been, again, to render the descriptive term along with the word "monkey," whether it appears in the text separately or not. Thus, we translate *plavaga*, "going by leaps," as "leaping monkey," *vanaukas*, "forest-dwelling," as "forest-dwelling monkey," *hari*, "tawny," as "tawny monkey," and so on. The last of these terms is particularly common in the text and refers, we believe, to

the ubiquitous Rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*), which is a common presence and even a menace throughout both urban and rural India. There does, however, seem to be a species differentiation suggested by the term *ṛkṣa*, which is often paired with other terms for “monkey.” Here we have taken the liberty of rendering this term as “apes” in its general, nonscientific sense to refer to both monkeys and true apes. Later versions of the Rāma story understand the term *ṛkṣa* to refer to bears rather than monkeys. We believe that the term actually refers to the so-called Hanuman langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*). This langur and the Rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*) are the most common species of monkey in India. There are no true apes native to all but the extreme northeast of the Indian subcontinent.

Sometimes an individual Sanskrit word has a broad range of meanings, and a given object might have a very large range of words that refer to it. And thus, in many cases, it is not really possible to map one Sanskrit word onto one specific English term. Therefore, we have simply made a series of “executive decisions” as to how to identify objects, particularly in the spheres of realia and natural history. A striking example here is the epic’s extensive lexicon for types of weapons. The epic mentions some fourteen types of arrows alone, for each of which we have had to find an English equivalent based, where possible, on the lexica, the etymology of the name, or the interpretation(s) of the various commentators consulted in preparing the translation. But the text also has several names for types of long, sharp throwing and piercing weapons, for which English has such names as “spear,” “lance,” “javelin,” “pike,” and so forth. It is difficult to distinguish these from one another in trying to map, imperfectly, the Sanskrit terms onto English ones. As a result, we have simply decided to choose a reasonable English term for each Sanskrit lexeme and stick to that consistently throughout the revised translation. For clarification we have provided a glossary of the names for the epic’s huge lexicon of terms for weapons at the end of the volume. The vast number of plants and animals found throughout the *Rāmāyaṇa* are often hard to identify and may not necessarily represent those of similar names found today. To aid the reader who is interested in identifying these, an extensive glossary of flora and fauna has been posted online and may be accessed at https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691206868/the-ramayana-of-valmiki.

Additionally, because of the revisions and editing of the original translation,

the reader should know that in a number of cases its annotation will not necessarily correspond to the translation presented in this volume.

For the rest we have striven throughout to render the sometimes complex Sanskrit syntax and the poem’s unfamiliar cultural frame into literal but clear and readable contemporary literary prose. It is our hope that you, the reader, will find the epic easy to follow, enjoyable, and educational, and that it will open up for you one of the greatest and most influential literary, religious, and cultural works ever composed.

Part II

THE RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI

Chapter 1

The *Bālakāṇḍa*

Sarga 1

[1–5] Vālmīki, the ascetic, questioned the eloquent Nārada, bull among sages, always devoted to asceticism and study of the sacred texts. “Is there a man in the world today who is truly virtuous? Who is there who is mighty and yet knows both what is right and how to act upon it? Who always speaks the truth and holds firmly to his vows? Who exemplifies proper conduct and is benevolent to all creatures? Who is learned, capable, and a pleasure to behold? Who is self-controlled, having subdued his anger? Who is both judicious and free from envy? Who, when his fury is aroused in battle, is feared even by the gods? This is what I want to hear, for my desire to know is very strong. Great seer, you must know of such a man.”

[6–11] When Nārada, who was familiar with all the three worlds, heard Vālmīki’s words, he was delighted. “Listen,” he replied and spoke these words: “The many virtues you have named are hard to find. Let me think a moment, sage, before I speak. Hear now of a man who has them all. His name is Rāma and he was born in the House of Ikṣvāku. All men know of him, for he is self-controlled, mighty, radiant, steadfast, and masterful. He is wise and grounded in proper conduct. Eloquent and majestic, he annihilates his enemies. His shoulders are broad and his arms mighty. His neck is like a conch shell and his jaws are powerful. His chest is vast, and a subduer of his enemies, he wields a huge bow. His collarbone is set deep in muscle, his arms reach down to his knees, and his head is finely made. His brow is noble and his gait full of grace. His proportions are perfect and his limbs well formed and symmetrical. Dark is his complexion and he is valorous. His chest is fully fleshed; he has large eyes. He is splendid and marked with all auspicious signs.

[12–15] “He knows the ways of righteousness and is always true to his word. The welfare of his subjects is his constant concern. He is renowned, learned, pure, disciplined, and contemplative. He is the protector of all

living things and the guardian of righteousness. Versed in the essence of the *vedas* and their ancillary sciences, he is expert in the science of arms. He is versed in the essence of every *śāstra*, learned in traditional lore, and highly intelligent. All the people love him, for he is good, cheerful, and clever. He is the constant resort of good men, as is the ocean of rivers. For he is noble and equable in all circumstances and always a pleasure to behold.

[16–24] "The delight of his mother, Kausalyā, he is gifted with every virtue. For he is as deep as the ocean and as unyielding as the Himalayas. He is as mighty as Viṣṇu, but as pleasant to behold as the moon. In his wrath he resembles the fire at the end of time, yet he rivals the earth in forbearance. In charity he is the equal of Kubera, giver of wealth, and in truthfulness like a second Dharma, the god of righteousness. Moved by affection for him, Daśaratha, lord of the earth, wished to appoint this Rāma, his beloved eldest son, as prince regent. For he was truly valorous, possessed all these virtues, and was gifted with other excellent virtues. Seeing the preparations for the consecration, the king's wife, Queen Kaikeyī, who had long before been granted a boon, now asked for it. She demanded that Rāma be exiled and that Bharata be consecrated in his place. Because he was a man true to his word, King Daśaratha was caught in the snare of his own righteousness and had to exile his dear son Rāma. Keeping the promise, the hero entered the forest, because of the command implicit in a father's word and in order to please Kaikeyī. Out of love for him, his beloved and obedient brother Lakṣmaṇa, the delight of Sumitrā, followed him as he set forth. And his wife, Sītā, the best of women, possessed of every grace, followed Rāma as Rohiṇī does the hare-marked moon.

[25–27] "He was followed far on his way by his father, Daśaratha, and the people of the city. But at the town of Śṛṅgavera on the banks of the Ganges he dismissed his charioteer. Wandering from wood to wood, they crossed great rivers until, on the instructions of Bharadvāja, they came to Mount Citrakūṭa. There the three of them built a pleasant dwelling. Delighting in the forest and resembling celestial *gandharvas*, they lived there happily.

[28–32] "When Rāma had gone to Mount Citrakūṭa, King Daśaratha was stricken with grief for his son and loudly lamenting him, went to heaven. After he died, the brahmans, led by Vasiṣṭha, urged Bharata to become king, but that mighty man did not desire kingship. Instead, the hero went to the

forest to beg for grace at Rāma's feet. But Bharata's elder brother only gave his sandals as a token of his sovereignty and repeatedly urged Bharata to return. Unable to accomplish his desire, Bharata touched Rāma's feet and ruled the kingdom from the village of Nandigrāma in expectation of Rāma's return. But Rāma, seeing that the people of the city had come there, entered the Daṇḍaka forest with single-minded resolution.

[33–38] "He killed the *rākṣasa* Virādha and met Śarabhañga, Sutīkṣṇa, Agastya, and Agastya's brother. On the advice of Agastya, and with the greatest pleasure, he accepted Indra's bow as well as a sword and two quivers, whose arrows were inexhaustible. While Rāma was living in the forest with the woodland creatures, all the seers came to see him about killing the *asuras* and *rākṣasas*. While dwelling there, he disfigured the *rākṣasa* woman Śūrpaṇakhā, who lived in Janasthāna and could take any form at will. Then Rāma slew in battle all the *rākṣasas* who had been sent against him on the strength of Śūrpaṇakhā's report—Khara, Triśiras, and the *rākṣasa* Dūṣaṇa, as well as all of their followers. Fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* were slain.

[39–42] "Then Rāvaṇa, hearing of the slaughter of his kinsmen, went mad with rage and chose a *rākṣasa* named Mārīca to assist him. Mārīca tried to dissuade Rāvaṇa many times, saying, 'Rāvaṇa, you would do well not to meddle with this mighty man.' But Rāvaṇa, who was driven by his fate, paid no heed to Mārīca's words and went with him to Rāma's ashram. With the help of that master of illusion, he lured both sons of the king far away. Then, having slain the vulture Jaṭāyus, he carried off Rāma's wife.

[43–47] "Finding the vulture dying and hearing that Maithilī had been abducted, Rāghava was consumed with grief. Beside himself with grief, he lamented loudly. In sorrow, he cremated the vulture Jaṭāyus. Then, searching the forest for Sītā, he met a *rākṣasa* named Kabandha, deformed and dreadful to behold. The great-armed man killed and cremated him so that he went to heaven. But Kabandha had first told him, 'Rāghava, you must go to the ascetic woman Śabarī, for she is cunning in all ways of righteousness and lives accordingly.' And so, the powerful destroyer of his foes came to Śabarī. Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, was duly honored by Śabarī. Then, on the shores of Lake Pampā, he met the monkey Hanumān.

[48–53] "Acting on Hanumān's advice, mighty Rāma met Sugrīva and told him all that had happened. Sensing that he had found a friend, the

sorrowful king of the monkeys told Rāma the whole story of his feud. And the monkey told him also of Vālin's might. Rāma vowed to kill Vālin, but Sugrīva remained doubtful of Rāghava's strength. So, to reassure him, Rāghava kicked the great corpse of Dundubhi ten whole leagues with his big toe. Furthermore, with a single mighty arrow, he pierced seven *sāla* trees, a hill, and even the underworld Rasātala, thus inspiring confidence. The great monkey was confident, and, his mind at ease, he went with Rāma to the cave Kiṣkindhā.

[54–57] "Then the foremost among the tawny monkeys, Sugrīva, yellow as gold, gave a great roar. At that roar, the lord of the tawny monkeys, Vālin, came forth. Rāghava then killed Vālin in battle at the request of Sugrīva and made Sugrīva king in his place. Eager to find Janaka's daughter, that bull among monkeys assembled all the monkeys and sent them out in all directions. On the advice of the vulture Saṃpāti, mighty Hanumān leapt over the salt sea, a hundred leagues in breadth.

[58–62] "Reaching the city of Laṅkā, which was ruled by Rāvaṇa, he saw Sītā brooding in a grove of *aśoka* trees. He gave her a token of recognition and told her all that had happened. Then, once he had comforted Vaidehī, he smashed the gate. He killed five generals of the army and seven ministers' sons as well. Then, after crushing the hero Akṣa, he was captured. Knowing that he could free himself from their divine weapon by means of a boon he had received from Grandfather Brahmā, the hero suffered the *rākṣasas* to bind him as they would. The great monkey then burned the city of Laṅkā, sparing Sītā Maithilī, and returned to tell the good news to Rāma.

[63–66] "Approaching great Rāma, the immeasurable monkey walked reverently around him and told him just what had happened, saying, 'I have found Sītā.' Rāma then went with Sugrīva to the seashore, where he made the ocean tremble with arrows blazing like the sun. The ocean, lord of rivers, revealed himself, and, following the ocean's advice, Rāma had Nala build a bridge. By this means he went to the city of Laṅkā, and, having killed Rāvaṇa in battle, he consecrated Vibhīṣaṇa as lord of the *rākṣasas* in Laṅkā.

[67–70] "The three worlds, including all that moves and is fixed, and the hosts of gods and seers were delighted by that mighty feat of great Rāma. All the gods were thoroughly delighted and worshiped Rāma. Having

accomplished what he had to do, he was freed from anxiety and rejoiced. He received boons from the gods and revived the fallen monkeys. Then, mounting the flying palace Puṣpaka, he went to Nandigrāma. In Nandigrāma the blameless man and his brothers put off the knotted hair of ascetics. Thus did Rāma regain Sītā and recover his kingdom.

[71–76] “His people are pleased and joyful, contented, well fed, and righteous. They are also free from physical and mental afflictions and from the danger of famine. Nowhere in his realm do men experience the death of a son. Women are never widowed and remain always faithful to their husbands. Just as in the Kṛta Yuga, there is no danger whatever of fire or wind, and no creatures are lost in floods. He performs hundreds of *aśvamedhas* involving vast quantities of gold. And in accordance with custom, he donates tens and hundreds of millions of cows to the learned. Rāghava is establishing hundreds of royal lines and has set the four social classes each to its own work in the world. When he has ruled the kingdom for eleven thousand years, Rāma will go to the Brahmaloka.

[77–79] “Whoever reads this history of Rāma, which is purifying, destructive of sin, holy, and the equal of the *vedas*, is freed from all sins. A man who reads this *Rāmāyaṇa* story, which leads to long life, will, after death, rejoice in heaven together with his sons, grandsons, and attendants. A brahman who reads it becomes eloquent, a kshatriya becomes a lord of the earth, a *vaiśya* acquires profit from his goods, and even a *śūdra* achieves greatness.”

Sarga 2

[1–4] When the great and eloquent sage had heard Nārada’s words, the righteous man and his disciples did him great honor. After the divine seer Nārada had been duly honored by the sage, he took his leave and, receiving it, flew off into the sky. Once Nārada had departed for the world of the gods, the sage went, after a while, to the bank of the Tamasā River, not far from the Jāhnavī, the Ganges. Upon reaching the Tamasā riverbank, the great sage spied a bathing spot that was free from mud and spoke to the disciple who stood beside him.

[5–8] “Bharadvāja, look at this lovely bathing place so free from mud. Its waters are as lucid as the mind of a good man. Set down the water jar, dear boy, and give me my barkcloth robe, for I will bathe here at this

excellent bathing spot of the Tamasā.” Addressed in this fashion by the great Vālmīka, Bharadvāja, ever attentive to his *guru*, gave him his barkcloth robe. Taking the barkcloth from his disciple’s hands, he walked about, his senses tightly controlled, looking all about him at the vast forest.

[9–14] Nearby, that holy man spied an inseparable pair of sweet-voiced *krauñca* birds wandering about. But even as he watched, a Niṣāda hunter, filled with malice and intent on mischief, struck down the male of the pair. Seeing him struck down and writhing on the ground, his body covered with blood, his mate uttered a piteous cry. And the pious seer, seeing the bird struck down in this fashion by the Niṣāda, was filled with pity. Then, in the intensity of this feeling of compassion, the brahman thought, “This is unrighteous.” Hearing the *krauñca* hen wailing, he uttered these words: “Since, Niṣāda, you killed one of this pair of *krauñcas*, distracted at the height of passion, you shall not live for very long.”

[15–18] And even as he was speaking in this fashion and looking on, this thought arose in his heart, “Stricken with grief for this bird, what is this I have uttered?” But upon reflection, that wise and thoughtful man came to a conclusion. Then that bull among sages spoke these words to his disciple: “Fixed in metrical quarters, each with a like number of syllables, and fit for the accompaniment of stringed and percussion instruments, the utterance that I produced in this access of *śoka*, ‘grief,’ shall be called *śloka*, ‘poetry,’ and nothing else.” And his delighted disciple memorized that unsurpassed utterance even as the sage was making it, so that his *guru* was pleased with him.

[19–21] Then, after taking his ritual bath according to precept at the bathing spot, the sage, still pondering this matter, went back to his ashram. His disciple, the obedient and learned Bharadvāja, took up his *guru*’s brimming water pot and followed behind him. The sage, who knew the ways of righteousness, entered his ashram with his disciple, seated himself, and began to discuss various other matters while still lost in profound thought.

[22–24] Then the mighty four-faced Brahmā himself, the creator of the worlds, came to see the bull among sages. Seeing him, Vālmīki rose quickly and without a word. He stood, subdued and greatly wonder struck, his hands cupped in reverence. Then he worshiped the god, offering water for his feet, the guest-offering, a seat, and hymns of praise. When he had made

the prescribed prostration before him, he asked after his continuing well-being.

[25–28] Once the holy lord was seated in a place of honor, he motioned the great seer Vālmīki also to a seat. But even though the grandfather of the worlds himself sat there before him, Vālmīki, his mind once more harking back to what had happened, lapsed again into profound thought: "That wicked man, his mind possessed by malice, did a terrible thing in killing such a sweet-voiced *krauñca* bird for no reason." Grieving once more for the *krauñca* hen, given over wholly to his grief and lost in his inner thought, he sang the verse again right there before the god.

[29–36] Smiling, Brahmā spoke to the bull among sages: "This is a *śloka* that you have composed. You needn't be perplexed about this. Brahman, it was by my will alone that you produced this elegant speech. Greatest of seers, you must now compose the entire history of Rāma. You must tell the world the story of the righteous, virtuous, wise, and steadfast Rāma, just as you heard it from Nārada, the full story, public and private, of that wise man. For all that befell wise Rāma, Saumitri, the *rākṣasas*, and Vaidehī, whether in public or private, will be revealed to you, even those events of which you are ignorant. No utterance of yours in this poem shall be false. Now compose the holy story of Rāma fashioned into *ślokas* to delight the heart. As long as the mountains and rivers shall endure upon the earth, so long will the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* be told among the people. And as long as the story of Rāma you compose is told, so long will you live on in my worlds above and below."

[37–41] When the holy Lord Brahmā had spoken in this fashion, he vanished on the spot, and the sage Vālmīki and his disciples were filled with wonder. Then all his disciples chanted that *śloka* again. Delighted and filled with wonder, they said over and over again: "The *śoka*, 'grief,' that the great seer sang out in four metrical quarters, all equal in syllables, has, by virtue of its being repeated after him, become *śloka*, 'poetry.' Then the contemplative Vālmīki conceived this idea: "Let me compose an entire poem, called the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in verses such as these." And thus, with enormous insight, did the renowned sage compose this poem that adds to the glory of the glorious Rāma, with hundreds of *ślokas* equal in syllables, their words noble in sound and meaning, delighting the heart.

Sarga 3

[1–2] And so it came about that the righteous man, having learned the entire substance of that story, wise Rāma's tale—so exemplary of righteousness—sought to make it public. First, the sage sipped water in the prescribed fashion. Then, seated on *darbha* grass with the tips pointed east and cupping his hands reverently, he sought through profound meditation the means of access to this tale:

[3–29] Rāma's birth; his great strength and kindliness to all; the people's love for him; his forbearance, gentleness, and truthful nature; the various other marvelous stories told on the journey with Viśvāmitra; Jānakī's wedding and the breaking of the bow; the dispute between the two Rāmas and the virtues of Dāśarathi; Rāma's consecration and Kaikeyī's wicked nature; the interruption of the consecration and the banishment of Rāma; the king's grief and lamentation and his departure for the next world; the dejection of the common people and their abandonment; the conversation with the Niṣāda chief and the return of the charioteer; the crossing of the Ganges and the meeting with Bharadvāja; the arrival at Mount Citrakūṭa on the instructions of Bharadvāja; the building of and dwelling in a hut and the coming of Bharata; the propitiation of Rāma and the funerary libations for his father; the consecration of the wonderful sandals and the dwelling in Nandigrāma; the journey to the Daṇḍaka forest and the meeting with Sutīkṣṇa; the encounter with Anasūyā and her presentation of the ointment; the conversation with Śūrpaṇakhā and her disfigurement; the slaying of Khara and Triśiras and the setting out of Rāvaṇa; the destruction of Mārīca and the abduction of Vaidehī; the lamentation of Rāghava and the death of the vulture king; the encounter with Kabandha and arrival at Lake Pampā; the encounters with Śabarī and Hanumān and the lamentations of great Rāghava at Lake Pampā; the journey to Ṛṣyamūka and the meeting with Sugrīva; the engendering of confidence, the alliance, and the battle between Vālin and Sugrīva; the slaying of Vālin and the installation of Sugrīva; the lamentation of Tārā; the agreement; and the settling in for the rainy season; the anger of the lion of the Rāghavas; the marshaling of the troops; their being dispatched in all directions; and the description of the earth; the giving of the ring; the discovery of Ṛkṣa's cave; the fast until death; and the encounter with Saṃpāti; the ascent of the mountain and the leap over the ocean; the entry into Laṅkā by night and the solitary deliberations; the

arrival at the drinking ground; the view of the women's quarters; the arrival at the *aśoka* grove and the meeting with Sītā; the giving of the token of recognition and Sītā's speech; the threats of the *rākṣasa* women and the dream-vision of Trijaṭā; Sītā's giving of the jewel and the breaking of the trees; the flight of the *rākṣasa* women and the slaughter of the servants; the capture of Vāyu's son Hanumān and the wailing at the burning of Laṅkā; the return leap; and the seizure of the honey wine; the consolation of Rāghava and the presentation of the jewel; the encounter with the ocean and the construction of Nala's bridge; the crossing of the ocean and the siege of Laṅkā by night; the alliance with Vibhīṣaṇa and his revelation of the means of destruction; the death of Kumbhakarṇa and the slaying of Meghanāda; the destruction of Rāvaṇa and the recovery of Sītā in the enemy's citadel; the consecration of Vibhīṣaṇa and the acquisition of the flying palace Puṣpaka; the journey to Ayodhyā and the meeting with Bharata; the celebration of Rāma's consecration and his dismissal of all his troops; his pleasing the kingdom and his sending away Vaidehī—all of this did the holy seer Vālmīki render into poetry including, in the latter portion of his poem, even those events that had not yet befallen Rāma on earth.

Sarga 4

[1–5] It was after Rāma had regained his kingdom that the holy and self-controlled seer Vālmīki composed this entire history in such wonderful words. When the wise master had completed it, including the sections dealing with the future and final events, he thought, "Who should perform it?" And, as the great contemplative seer was pondering this, Kuśa and Lava, in the guise of sages, came and touched his feet. He looked at the two glorious brothers, Kuśa and Lava, who lived in his ashram, for they were sons of the king, familiar with the ways of righteousness, and endowed with sweet voices. Perceiving that they were well grounded in the *vedas* and had excellent memories, he accepted them as students of vedic exegesis.

[6–10] A man who always fulfilled his vows, he taught them the whole of this poem, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which is the great tale of Sītā and the slaying of Paulastya. It is sweet both when recited and when sung in the three tempos to the seven notes of the scale, and it is eminently suitable for the accompaniment of both stringed and percussion instruments. The two disciples sang the poem, which is replete with all the poetic sentiments: the

humorous, the erotic, the piteous, the wrathful, the heroic, the terrifying, the loathsome, and the rest. The brothers, beautiful as *gandharvas*, had beautiful voices and were well versed in the *gandharvas*' musical art. They were expert in both articulation and modulation. Gifted with beauty and auspicious marks, they spoke with sweet voices. They looked like twin reflections of the same image, Rāma's body.

[11–12] This unsurpassed tale is exemplary of righteousness, and so the two blameless sons of the king learned the entire poem by heart. And when they had done so, the two great and gifted men, who understood its essence and were marked by every auspicious sign, sang it as they had been instructed, with single-minded concentration before assemblies of seers, twice-born brahmans, and virtuous men.

[13–20] Now on one occasion the two sang the poem in the presence of some pure-minded seers who were seated in an assembly. When the sages heard it, their eyes were clouded with tears and filled with the greatest wonder, they all said to the two, "Excellent, excellent!" All the sages, glad at heart and loving righteousness, praised Kuśa and Lava as they sang, for they were worthy of praise: "Ah, the sweetness of the singing and especially the poetry! Even though this all took place so long ago, it is as though it were happening before our very eyes." Then the two of them together, entering fully into the emotion of the story, sang it with the full range of notes, sweetly and with feeling. Praised in this fashion by those great seers, who were themselves to be extolled for their asceticism, they sang more sweetly still and with still greater feeling. One sage there, delighted, gave them a water jar. Another, a man of great renown, gave them a barkcloth mantle. This wondrous tale that the sage told and that he completed in perfect sequence is the great source of inspiration for poets.

[21–27] Now it happened that on one occasion, the elder brother of Bharata saw there those two singers who were being praised everywhere on the roads and royal highways. And Rāma, the destroyer of his enemies, brought the brothers, Kuśa and Lava, to his own dwelling, where he honored them, for they were worthy of honor. Then Lord Rāma, chastiser of his foes, seated on a heavenly throne of gold with his ministers and brothers sitting nearby, looked at the two beautiful youths with their lutes and spoke to Lakṣmaṇa, Śatrughna, and Bharata: "Let us listen to this tale, whose words and meaning alike are wonderful, as it is sweetly sung by these two

godlike men. For although these two sages, Kuśa and Lava, are great ascetics, they bear all the marks of kings. Moreover, it is said that the profound tale they tell is highly beneficial, even for me. Listen to it." Then, at a word from Rāma, the two of them began to sing in the full perfection of the *mārga* mode. And right there in the assembly, even Rāma, in his desire to experience it fully, gradually permitted his mind to become enthralled.

Sarga 5

[1–4] This great tale, known as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, concerns itself with the dynasty of those great and victorious kings, the Ikṣvākus, descendants of Prajāpati, lord of creatures, and those to whom this whole earth first of all belonged. Among them was Sagara, who caused the ocean to be dug and who had sixty thousand sons to form his entourage when he went abroad. I will recite it from the beginning in its entirety, omitting nothing. It is in keeping with the goals of righteousness, profit, and pleasure, and should be listened to with faith.

[5–9] There is a great, happy, and prosperous country called Kosala, situated on the banks of the Sarayū River and rich in abundance of wealth and grain. There was situated the world-famous city of Ayodhyā, a city built by Manu himself, lord of men. It was a great and majestic city, twelve leagues long and three wide, with well-ordered avenues. It was adorned with a great and well-ordered royal highway, always strewn with loose blossoms and constantly sprinkled with water. King Daśaratha, who had expanded a realm already great, dwelt in that city like the lord of the gods in heaven.

[10–19] It was provided with doors and gates, and its markets had well-ordered interiors. It contained every implement and weapon and was the resort of every artisan. It was majestic, unequaled in splendor, and thronged with bards and rhapsodists. It had pennants on its tall towers and bristled with hundreds of hundred-slayers. It was a great city filled with troupes of actresses everywhere, dotted with parks and mango groves, and girdled by ramparts. It was a fortress with a deep moat impossible to cross, was unassailable by its enemies, and was filled with horses, elephants, cows, camels, and donkeys. Filled with crowds of neighboring kings come to pay tribute, it was likewise adorned with merchants of many different lands. It was splendid with hills and palaces fashioned of jewels. Bristling with its

rooftop turrets, it resembled Indra's Amarāvatī. Colorful, laid out like a chessboard, and crowded with hosts of the most beautiful women, it was filled with every kind of jewel and adorned with palatial buildings. Situated on level ground, its houses were built in close proximity to one another, without the slightest gap between them. It held plentiful stores of *śāli* rice, and its water was like the juice of sugar cane. Loudly resounding with drums and stringed instruments—*dundubhis*, *mṛdaṅgas*, lutes, and *paṇavas*—it was truly unsurpassed on earth. The outer walls of its dwellings were well constructed, and it was filled with good men. Indeed, it was like a palace in the sky that perfected beings had gained through austerities.

[20–23] King Daśaratha had populated the entire city with thousands of great chariot-warriors, both skillful and dexterous—men who would never loose their arrows upon a foe who was isolated from his comrades, the sole support of his family, in hiding, or in flight, but who slew with their sharp weapons, or even the strength of their bare hands, lions, tigers, and boars, bellowing with rage in the forest. But the king also peopled the city with great brahmans who tended the sacred fires and had mastered the *vedas* with their six ancillary sciences—men who were devoted to truth and gave away thousands in charity—and with prominent seers, like the great seers themselves.

Sarga 6

[1–5] Dwelling in that city of Ayodhyā, King Daśaratha ruled the earth, just as powerful Manu once ruled the world. He knew the *vedas* and was lord and master of everything. Powerful and gifted with foresight, he was loved by the people of both town and countryside. That master chariot-warrior of the Ikṣvākus performed sacrifices and was devoted to righteousness. He was renowned in the three worlds as a masterful man and a royal seer like one of the great seers. He was mighty and had slain his enemies, yet he had also conquered his senses and had many friends. In wealth and accumulated property, he was the equal of Śakra or Vaiśravaṇa, lord of wealth. True to his vows and ever cultivating the three goals of life, he ruled that splendid city as Indra rules Amarāvatī.

[6–11] In that great city men were happy, righteous, and deeply learned. They were truthful and not covetous, for each man was content with his own property. In that most excellent city there was no householder who did

not have significant property, who had not accomplished his goals, or who was not possessed of cattle, horses, wealth, and grain. Nowhere in Ayodhyā could one find a lecher, a miser, a cruel or unlearned man, or an agnostic. All the men and women conducted themselves in accordance with righteousness and were self-controlled and joyful. In disposition and conduct they were as pure as the great seers themselves. No one lacked earrings, diadem, and necklace. No one was deprived of pleasures. There was no one who was dirty or whose body lacked for ointments or perfume. There was no one who had unclean food or was ungenerous. There was nobody who did not wear an armlet and a golden breastplate. No one was lacking in either rings or self-control.

[12–18] Nor was there in Ayodhyā a single brahman who did not kindle the sacred fires, sacrifice, and donate thousands in charity. Nor was there anyone who indulged in mixing of the social classes. The brahmans had subdued their senses and were always devoted to their proper occupation. They were given over to charity and study and were restrained in accepting gifts. There were no agnostics and no liars. There was no one who was not deeply learned. No one was envious, incompetent, or ignorant. No one was unhappy, fickle, or troubled. In Ayodhyā, one could not find a man or a woman lacking in grace or beauty, or anyone who was not devoted to the king. The men of all the social classes, of which the foremost, that of the brahmans, makes the fourth, worshiped both gods and guests. They were long-lived, practicing truth and righteousness. The kshatriyas accepted the brahmans as their superiors, and the *vaiśyas* were subservient to the kshatriyas. The *śūdras*, devoted to their proper duty, served the other three classes. In short, the city was as well governed by that lord of the Ikṣvākus as it had been long ago by the wise Manu, foremost of men.

[19–24] Like a cave filled with lions, it was full of fiery warriors, skilled, unyielding, and accomplished in their art. It was full of the finest horses, bred in the regions of Bāhlīka, Vanāyu, Kāmboja, and the great river, the equals of Hari's steed. It was filled with exceedingly powerful rutting elephants, like mountains, born in the Vindhya hills and the Himalayas. The city was always full of bull elephants, looking like mountains and always in rut; elephants of the *bhadramandra*, *bhadramṛga*, and *mṛgamandra* breeds, descended from the cosmic elephants Añjana and Vāmana. Indeed, its name, Ayodhyā—the unassailable—was truly meaningful, even two leagues

beyond its gates. Thus did the lord of the earth, Śakra's equal, rule that auspicious and aptly named city crowded with thousands of men, resplendent with wonderful buildings, its gates fitted with firm bolts.

Sarga 7

[1–5] That hero had eight renowned ministers, incorruptible and unswervingly devoted to affairs of state. They were Dhṛṣti, Jayanta, Vijaya, Siddhārtha, Arthasādhaka, Aśoka, Mantrapāla, and Sumantra, who made the eighth. He had also two principal sacrificial priests, the foremost of seers, Vasiṣṭha and Vāmadeva, as well as other counselors. Great and majestic, learned in the *śāstras*, and steadfast in courage, they were renowned, diligent, and as good as their word. They had acquired power, forbearance, and fame, and always spoke with a smile. They would never utter a false word, whether from anger or for the sake of pleasure or profit.

[6–10] Nothing took place, either in their own realm or abroad, that they didn't know about by means of secret agents, whether it was already accomplished, actually taking place, or even merely contemplated. Adept at their duties, they were tested in loyalty so that, if the occasion demanded, they would punish even their own sons. They were busy increasing the treasury and maintaining the army and would not harm even a hostile man, if he had done no wrong. Heroic, unflagging in energy, they put into practice the science of statecraft. They were the constant protectors of all honest inhabitants of the realm. They filled the treasury without injury to the brahmans and kshatriyas and meted out strict punishment only after considering the relative gravity of a man's offense.

[11–17] When all those honest and like-minded men sat in judgment, there was not a single man in the city or the kingdom who dared to bear false witness. There was no such thing as a wicked man there, or a man who made love to another man's wife. That splendid city and, indeed, the whole country were at peace. The ministers' garments were fine, their ornaments beautiful, and their conduct impeccable. With the eye of statecraft, they were vigilant on behalf of the welfare of the lord of men. Sensible only of the virtues of their master, they were famed for their courage. They were known everywhere, even in foreign lands, for their resoluteness of mind. Blessed with ministers such as these, possessed of such virtues, blameless King Daśaratha ruled the earth. Ever watchful through his secret agents,

pleasing his subjects in accordance with righteousness, he found no enemy to be his equal, much less superior to him. Surrounded by devoted, clever, and capable counselors, skilled both in counsel and in strategy, the king achieved a blazing splendor, as does the rising sun surrounded by its shining rays.

Sarga 8

[1–6] But even though the great man knew all the ways of righteousness and reigned in such magnificence, he suffered for the lack of a son, for he had no son to carry on his dynasty. And as the great man brooded over this, a thought occurred to him: "Why do I not perform the *aśvamedha* to get a son?" Once the wise and righteous king, in consultation with all his accomplished counselors, had reached the decision that he must sacrifice, he said this to Sumantra, the foremost among them, "Fetch my *purohita* and all my *gurus* at once." Hearing that, Sumantra, who served as his charioteer, spoke to the king in private, "I have heard an ancient story that is told by the sacrificial priests. Long ago, your majesty, in the presence of the seers, the holy Sanatkumāra told this tale, which has to do with your acquiring a son:

[7–13] " 'Kāśyapa has a son known as Vibhāṇḍaka. The latter will have a son famed as Ṛśyaśṛṅga. Raised entirely in the forest, a sage dwelling only in the woods, that lord among brahmans will know nothing other than constant obedience to his father. That great man's chastity will be destroyed, and that event, your majesty, will become famous among the people and will long be talked about by brahmans. But still, there will be a time when he shall live only by serving the sacred fire and his renowned father. During that very time, the mighty, valorous, and famous Romapāda will be the king of the Aṅgas. Because of some transgression on the part of that king, there will be a cruel and terrible drought endangering all creatures. While the drought persists, the king, in distress, will assemble brahmans advanced in learning and will say to them:

[14–17] " ' "You gentlemen are learned in the ways of righteousness and understand the ways of the world. Prescribe some penance such that I might find expiation." And those brahmans, masters of the *veda*, will say to the protector of the earth, "Your majesty, you must by some means or other bring Vibhāṇḍaka's son here. And, protector of the earth, once you have had

Ṛśyaśṛṅga brought with all due honor, you must, with due ceremony and unwavering mind, offer him your daughter Śāntā.” When the king hears their advice he will begin to consider, “By what means can that mighty man be brought here?”

[18–23] “ ‘Then the wise king, having come to a decision in consultation with his counselors, will dispatch his *purohita* and ministers, after duly honoring them. But they, hearing the words of the king, will be distressed, and with lowered faces, they will entreat with the protector of men, “We dare not go. We are afraid of the seer.” But afterwards, when they have thought of a suitable means for accomplishing that purpose, they will say, “We shall bring the brahman. There will be no difficulty.” And so the king of Aṅga will bring the seer’s son by means of prostitutes. Śāntā will be given to him, and the god will cause rain. Ṛśyaśṛṅga, his son-in-law, shall produce sons for you.’ Thus far, have I related the tale told by Sanatkumāra.” Daśaratha was delighted, and he replied to Sumantra, “Tell me exactly how Ṛśyaśṛṅga was brought.”

Sarga 9

[1–6] Pressed by the king, Sumantra said these words: “You and your counselors shall hear how they brought Ṛśyaśṛṅga. Romapāda’s *purohita* and ministers said this to him: ‘We have devised a flawless plan. Ṛśyaśṛṅga is a forest dweller devoted to austerity and study. He is wholly unacquainted with women and the pleasures of the senses. So we shall bring him to the city with pleasant objects of the senses that agitate the thoughts of men. Let it be arranged at once. Let beautiful, richly adorned prostitutes go there. He will receive them with honor, and they will infatuate him in various ways and bring him here.’ When the king had heard this, he replied to his *purohita*, ‘So be it.’ His *purohita* and counselors then did just as they had said.

[7–12] “Upon hearing their instructions, the finest courtesans entered the great forest and stayed near the ashram trying to catch a glimpse of the seer’s steadfast son who always stayed within it. Wholly content with just his father, he had never ventured outside the ashram. From the day of his birth, that ascetic had never seen either a man or a woman, or any other creature of the city or the countryside. But on one occasion, Vibhāṇḍaka’s son happened to come to the place where the women were and saw them.

Wearing beautiful clothes and singing with sweet voices, all those beautiful young women approached the seer's son and said these words: 'Who are you? How do you live? Brahman, we wish to know. Tell us, why do you wander alone in this dreadful and deserted forest?'

[13–17] "In a sudden feeling of love for these women with their desirable bodies and their looks such as he had never before seen, the idea came to him there in the forest to tell them about his father: 'My father is Vibhāṇḍaka and I am his flesh-and-blood son. My name—Ṛśyaśṛṅga—and my occupation are well known throughout the world. But you look so lovely. Our ashram is nearby, and there I will do you honor as custom demands.' Hearing the words of the seer's son, they all consented. Then they all went with him to see the ashram. When they had arrived, the seer's son received them with honor, saying: 'Here is the guest-offering; here is water to wash your feet, here are our roots and fruits.'

[18–23] "But although they had accepted his hospitality and were filled with longing, they were fearful of the seer and so resolved to leave quickly, saying: 'We too have excellent fruits, twice-born brahman. Bless you. Take some and eat them now.' Then they all embraced him joyfully, offering him sweets and various other good things to eat. When the mighty man tasted them, he thought that they were fruits that he, living always in the forest, had never tasted before. Then the women, telling the brahman that they had some religious observance to perform, took their leave. Fearful of his father, they departed on that pretext. But when they had all gone, the twice-born brahman, son of Kāśyapa, became sick at heart and wandered about in misery.

[24–28] "Therefore, the very next day, that mighty man came again to the place where he had seen those charming, richly adorned courtesans. When they saw the brahman coming, their hearts were delighted, and they all approached him and said, 'Now you must come to our ashram, friend. There the welcome ceremony will be especially lavish.' Upon hearing all of them utter these words that went straight to his heart, he resolved to go with them. Thus the women led him away. And even as they were bringing the great brahman there, the god suddenly brought rain, refreshing the world.

[29–32] "The lord of men went humbly out to meet the sage who had come to his kingdom bringing rain. He placed his head on the ground before him, and, his thoughts focused, he offered him a propitiatory gift as

custom demanded. He then begged for the favor of the great brahman, saying: ‘Please do not be angry, brahman.’ Then the king entered the women’s quarters, and, having given him his daughter Śāntā according to precept, with tranquil heart, he attained happiness. And that is how the mighty Ṛśyaśṛṅga came to dwell there with his wife, Śāntā, gratified with every desirable thing.”

Sarga 10

[1–7] “Now listen further, lord of kings, to my helpful story, just as that wise descendant of the gods related it. ‘There will be born in the House of Ikṣvāku a righteous king named Daśaratha, majestic and true to his vows. This king will form an alliance with the king of Aṅga, to whom will be born an illustrious maiden named Śāntā. The king of Aṅga will have a son known as Romapāda, and the renowned King Daśaratha will approach him and say: “I have no children, righteous man. Let Śāntā’s husband, with your permission, undertake a sacrifice for me in order to perpetuate my family’s lineage.” When that wise man hears the king’s request and turns it over in his mind, he will lend him Śāntā’s husband who can give him sons. The king will receive that brahman, and, free from anxiety, he will undertake his sacrifice with a glad heart.

[8–11] “ ‘Eager to sacrifice, King Daśaratha, lord of men, who knows the ways of righteousness, will fold his hands in supplication and will beg Ṛśyaśṛṅga, that best of twice-born brahmans, to perform his sacrifice and grant him sons and heaven. And the lord of the people will obtain his desire from that foremost of twice-born brahmans. He will have four sons, measureless in valor and famed in all the worlds to perpetuate his line.’ Thus did the son of the gods, the holy Lord Sanatkumāra, tell the tale long ago in the age of the gods.

[12–21] “Now, great king, you must go yourself, tiger among men, with troops and mounts, to bring Ṛśyaśṛṅga with great honor.” When the king had heard his charioteer’s words and secured the permission of Vasiṣṭha, he set out with his wives and ministers to where that twice-born brahman lived. Slowly traversing forests and rivers, he came to the country where that bull among sages dwelt. Arriving there, he immediately saw the seer’s son, that best of twice-born brahmans, shining like fire, near Romapāda. Then, according to custom and with a glad heart, King Romapāda paid

King Daśaratha special honor, because of their alliance. Romapāda told the seer's wise son about their alliance and kinship. Then Ṛśyaśṛṅga did honor to Daśaratha. Thus, duly honored by King Romapāda, King Daśaratha, bull among men, stayed with him for seven or eight days and then said this to him, "Your majesty, lord of the people, let your daughter Śāntā come to my city with her husband, for a great ceremony is at hand." The king promised that the wise man would go, saying, "So be it." He then said these words to the brahman, "Please go there with your wife." The seer's son consented in turn, saying, "So be it," to the king. And so, taking his leave of the king, he set out with his wife.

[22–29] Daśaratha and the mighty Romapāda cupped their hands reverently to one another, and, having embraced each other affectionately, they rejoiced. Once he had taken leave of his friend, the delight of the Raghus set out, after dispatching swift messengers to the people of his city, saying, "Let the entire city be decorated at once." Hearing that the king was returning, the people of the city were delighted and carried out all that the king had commanded. Preceded by that bull among twice-born brahmans, the king entered his beautifully decorated city to the sound of conches and drums. When the people of the city saw the twice-born brahman being ushered in and honored by the lord of men whose deeds were like those of Indra, they were all delighted. The king had Ṛśyaśṛṅga enter the women's quarters after doing him honor in the manner prescribed in the *śāstras*. Then, by virtue of his having brought him, he regarded himself as one who had already accomplished his purpose. All the women watched the large-eyed Śāntā arrive in this fashion with her husband, and because of their love for her, they rejoiced. Honored by them and especially by the king, she was delighted and dwelt there with the brahman for some time.

Sarga 11

[1–6] After some time, when spring had come, ravishing the heart, the king set his mind on performing the sacrifice. With bowed head he propitiated the brahman Ṛśyaśṛṅga, splendid as a god, and begged him to perform the sacrifice for the continuation of his dynasty. Treated with such respect, the latter said to the king, "Very well. You may gather all the necessary articles and release the horse." The king then spoke these words to Sumantra, the foremost of counselors: "Sumantra, summon sacrificial priests learned in

the *vedas* at once." Swift-stepping Sumantra left quickly to assemble all the brahmans who were masters of the *veda*. He called Suyajña, Vāmadeva, and Jābāli, as well as Kāśyapa, the *purohita* Vasiṣṭha, and other prominent twice-born brahmans.

[7–12] Righteous King Daśaratha honored them and spoke gentle words in keeping with both righteousness and sound policy: "Sorely lamenting the lack of a son, I take no joy in anything. For that reason, I have resolved to perform the *aśvamedha*. I wish to perform that sacrifice according to the rites prescribed in the ritual texts so that, through the power of the seer's son, I may obtain my heart's desire." Then all the brahmans, led by Vasiṣṭha, approved those words that had issued from the mouth of the king, crying, "Excellent!" Making Ṛśyaśṛṅga their spokesman, they further addressed the lord of men, "You may gather all the necessary articles and release the horse. Since you have made this righteous resolution in order to obtain a son, you shall surely get four sons immeasurable in valor."

[13–21] When the king heard those words of the twice-born brahmans, he was delighted and in his joy said these auspicious words to his ministers: "At the behest of my *gurus*, gather all the necessary articles at once. Also release the horse, to be guarded by strong men and attended by our preceptor. Have the sacrificial ground laid out on the northern bank of the Sarayū and let the propitiatory rites be performed in due order and according to precept. This sacrifice may be performed by every guardian of the earth provided that in the performance of this, the greatest of rites, there occurs no serious error. For learned brahman-*rākṣasas* ceaselessly search for any flaw in it. Whoever performs this sacrifice without following all the injunctions perishes instantly. You are skilled in ritual performances. Therefore, let the preliminary rites be performed in such a way that this sacrifice of mine is completed according to precept." Saying, "So be it," all his counselors approved these words of the best of kings and then did as he had commanded. Then all the brahmans praised that bull among kings who knew the ways of righteousness and, taking their leave, departed as they had come. When the twice-born brahmans had gone, the splendid lord of men dismissed his counselors and entered his private chambers.

Sarga 12

[1–7] When a full year had elapsed and spring had come once more, Daśaratha ceremonially greeted and honored Vasiṣṭha, according to custom, and, desiring progeny, spoke this respectful speech to that best of brahmans: “Brahman, bull among sages, please perform the sacrifice for me, as you said you would. Please arrange it so that there shall be no impediment to any of the elements of the sacrifice. You are my dear friend and supreme *guru*. Once the sacrifice is begun, responsibility for it is to be borne by you alone.” The eminent twice-born brahman replied, “So be it,” and told the king: “I will do all that you have requested.” Then he spoke to experienced brahmans, well versed in the operations of the sacrifice, and to righteous men, well versed and experienced in the art of construction. He spoke also to reliable artisans, carpenters, excavators, astrologers, artists, dancers, actors, and deeply learned men who were honest and well versed in the *śāstras*, saying:

[8–15] “Gentlemen, you must begin work for the sacrifice in accordance with the king’s command. Bring many thousands of bricks at once. Let royal dwellings, complete with all amenities, be constructed for the kings and hundreds of fine houses for the brahmans. They must be very well built and stocked with every sort of food and drink. You must also build spacious dwellings for the city folk stocked with good things to eat and furnished with everything one could desire. Even the country folk must be given fine food in accordance with custom, and not contemptuously, but with respect. Everything is to be done in such a way that all classes of society are treated well and shown respect. No disrespect is to be shown anyone, even though you may be under the influence of lust or anger. Those men who are artisans engaged in work pertaining to the sacrifice are to be shown special respect according to their rank. You gentlemen, your hearts softened by love, must act so that everything is well arranged and nothing omitted.” Then all of them came together and replied to Vasiṣṭha, saying:

[16–20] “We shall do just as you have said. Nothing whatever shall be omitted.” Vasiṣṭha then summoned Sumantra and said: “Invite all the righteous kings of the earth, as well as thousands of brahmans, kshatriyas, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*. Assemble men from all lands here and do them honor. You are—personally and with great respect—to escort Janaka, that truly valorous hero, the illustrious ruler of Mithilā; for he is well versed both in the *vedas* and in every *śāstra*. Knowing him to be our ancient kinsman, I

mention him first. But you must also personally escort the friendly and godlike lord of Kāśi, who always speaks kindly and whose conduct is impeccable.

[21–26] “Also bring the father-in-law of our lion among kings, the aged and exceedingly righteous king of the Kekayas and his son. Showing the utmost respect, bring Romapāda, the king of Aṅga, the illustrious and renowned friend of our lion among kings. Bring all the eastern kings, and the kings of Sindhu-Sauvīra and Saurāṣṭra, as well as the southern lords of men. And whichever of the other kings on the earth may be friendly to us, bring them at once, along with their followers and kinsmen.” Upon hearing those words of Vasiṣṭha, Sumantra made haste and dispatched good men to bring the kings. Then righteous Sumantra, following the sage’s orders, set forth himself in haste to assemble the lords of the earth.

[27–29] Meanwhile, all the reliable workmen reported to wise Vasiṣṭha that everything had been made ready for the sacrifice. The eminent twice-born brahman was pleased and addressed them once more: “Nothing is to be given to anyone with disrespect or contempt. A thing offered with disrespect destroys the giver. Of this there can be no doubt.” For several days and nights, the rulers of the earth arrived, bringing many fine gifts for King Daśaratha.

[30–34] At last, Vasiṣṭha, greatly pleased, said this to the king: “Tiger among men, the kings have arrived, at your command. I myself have honored all these excellent kings, each according to his merit. Meanwhile, your majesty, our painstaking workmen have completed all the preparations for the sacrifice. Your majesty, go forth to sacrifice at the sacrificial ground so near at hand, for it is now completely furnished with all the desirable things that have been brought.” And so, acting on the advice of both Vasiṣṭha and Ṛśyaśṛṅga, the lord of the world went forth on an auspicious day and under an auspicious constellation. Then all the eminent brahmans, led by Vasiṣṭha, placed Ṛśyaśṛṅga at their head and began the sacrificial rite.

Sarga 13

[1–6] When a full year had elapsed and the horse had been brought back, the royal sacrifice was begun on the northern bank of the Sarayū River. Led by Ṛśyaśṛṅga, those bulls among twice-born brahmans performed the

aśvamedha, greatest of rites, for the great king. The sacrificial priests, masters of the *vedas*, performed the rite according to precept. Following the vedic prescriptions, they undertook it in the correct manner, according to the *śāstras*. After they had performed the preliminary offerings, the *pravargya* and the *upasad*, according to the *śāstras*, the brahmans carried out all the additional rites according to precept laid down in those texts. Completing their preliminary worship, all those bulls among sages were filled with joy. They then performed, according to the ritual injunctions, the rites beginning with the morning pressing. Nothing in those rites was omitted or improperly offered, and every rite was accompanied by the appropriate vedic recitation; indeed, they performed them perfectly.

[7–12] During that period there was not a single brahman to be found who was fatigued, hungry, ignorant, or lacking a hundred attendants. Brahmans and their dependents were fed continually. Ascetics were fed, and so were wandering mendicants. The aged and the sick were fed, and so were the women and children. And although they ate continually, they never felt jaded. "Give! Give food and all kinds of garments." So the servants were ordered, and so they did, again and again. Day after day one could see there, like mountains, heap upon heap of perfectly prepared food. The bulls among twice-born brahmans praised it, and Rāghava heard them say, "The food is properly prepared and delicious. Ah, bless you, we have had enough."

[13–16] Richly ornamented serving men waited upon the brahmans, while others, with earrings of sparkling jewels, assisted them. In the intervals between the various rites, learned and eloquent brahmans, desirous of defeating one another, engaged in numerous philosophical debates. Day after day, skilled twice-born brahmans, following instructions, performed, in accordance with the ritual texts, all the rites that make up the sacrifice. Every one of the twice-born brahmans who officiated for the king was grounded in the six ancillary sciences, practiced in penitential vows, deeply learned, and skilled in disputation.

[17–23] When the sacrificial posts were erected, there were six of *bilva* wood, six of *khadira* wood, and in conjunction with those of *bilva* wood, a like number of *parṇin* wood. There was the prescribed post of *śleṣmātaka* wood and posts of *devadāru* wood. Of the latter, two were prescribed, set so as to be just grasped by the sacrificer with his arms spread wide. Those

men, learned in the *śāstras* and skilled in sacrifice, had fashioned all of them, and so that the sacrifice would be beautiful, they adorned them with gold. Finely made by artisans, firm, octagonal, and smooth, they were all set in place according to the ritual injunctions. Covered with fine hangings and adorned with flowers and perfume, they were as splendid as the constellation of the Seven Seers shining in the sky. The bricks were made in the prescribed manner and in accordance with the prescribed measurements. The fire altar was built up by twice-born brahmans skilled in the science of ritual calculation. Those skilled brahmans built up the fire altar of that lion among kings into the shape of a golden-winged eagle with eighteen layers, three times the usual height.

[24–31] The prescribed victims—snakes, birds, the horse, and aquatic animals—were bound at the place of immolation; each was dedicated to a specific divinity, as is set forth in the ritual texts. The sacrificial priests then bound them all to the posts in the manner set forth in the *śāstras*. Three hundred beasts in addition to Daśaratha's jewel of a horse were bound there to the sacrificial posts. Kausalyā walked reverently all around the horse and then, with the greatest joy, cut it with three knives. Her mind unwavering in her desire for righteousness, Kausalyā passed one night with the horse. The priests—the *hotṛ*, the *adhvaryu*, and the *udgātṛ*—saw to it that the second and the junior-most of the king's wives, as well as his chief queen, were united with the horse. Then the sacrificial priest, who was extremely adept and held his senses in check, removed the fat of the horse and cooked it in the manner prescribed in the *śāstras*. At the proper time and in accordance with the ritual prescriptions, the lord of men then sniffed the fragrance of the smoking fat, thereby freeing himself from sin. Then, acting in unison, the sixteen brahman sacrificial priests threw the limbs of the horse into the fire, in accordance with the ritual injunctions.

[32–37] In other sacrifices, the oblation is offered upon branches of the *plakṣa* tree, but in the *aśvamedha* alone the apportionment of the victim is made on a bed of reeds. The *aśvamedha* is known as the Three-Day Rite, for both the *kalpasūtra* and the *brāhmaṇas* refer to the *aśvamedha* as a rite lasting for three days. On the first day, the *catuṣṭoma* rite is to be performed. On the second day the rite called *ukthya* is prescribed, and after that the *atirātra* rite. On this occasion, however, they performed many additional rites that are prescribed in the view of some authors of *śāstras*.

Thus, they performed those great rites, the *jyotiṣṭoma* and the *āyus* rites, as well as two *atirātras*—the *abhijit* and the *viśvajit*—and the *aptoryāma*. The king, now enabled to extend his dynasty, gave the east to the *hotṛ*, the west to the *adhvaryu*, and the south to the *brahman*. To the *udgātṛ* he gave the north, for that was the fee set for that great rite, the *aśvamedha*, ordained by self-existent Brahmā long ago.

[38–46] Then the king, that bull among men and great patron of sacrifices, seeing that the sacrifice had been completed in accordance with the ritual injunctions, gave away the entire earth to the sacrificial priests. But the sacrificial priests all said to the king, now cleansed of his sins: “You alone, sir, are capable of protecting the whole earth. We have no business with the earth, for we are utterly incapable of protecting it. Protector of the earth, we are wholly absorbed in our vedic studies. Please, sir, give us some appropriate compensation.” So the king gave them a million cows, a hundred million gold pieces, and four times that amount in silver. Then the sacrificial priests jointly presented these riches to the sage Ṛśyaśṛṅga and wise Vasiṣṭha. Those eminent brahmans made an appropriate division of the fee and, greatly delighted, their hearts content, they all indicated their satisfaction to the king. And so the king, content at heart, brought to a close that greatest of sacrifices that, though it cleanses one of sin and leads one to heaven, is difficult to carry through for even a bull among kings. King Daśaratha then said to Ṛśyaśṛṅga, “You are true to your vows. Please act so that my line may be extended.” The eminent twice-born brahman replied to the king, “So be it. Your majesty, you shall have four sons to carry on your line.”

Sarga 14

[1–4] Ṛśyaśṛṅga, who was learned in the *vedas* and gifted with insight, entered a trance for some time. Emerging from his trance, he made this reply to the protector of men: “In order to procure sons for you, I must perform the son-producing sacrifice. It must be done in accordance with the injunctions of the ritual texts and rendered efficacious by *mantras* set down in the *Atharva Veda*.” Then that mighty man commenced the son-producing sacrifice in order to produce sons. He poured the oblation into the fire according to the rite specified in the *vedas*. At that, the gods, *gandharvas*,

perfected beings, and supreme seers assembled in the proper order to receive their shares of the offering.

[5–11] And when the gods had gathered at the sacrificial enclosure, in the customary order, they spoke grave words to Brahmā, creator of the world: "Lord, a *rākṣasa* named Rāvaṇa, who has secured your favor, is oppressing us all. Because of his great power, we are unable to chastise him. Once, long ago, lord, when you were pleased with him, you granted him a boon. Always respectful of that, we suffer everything that he does. He is evil-minded and makes the three worlds tremble in fear. He hates anyone greater than himself and wants to overthrow even Śakra, the king of the thirty gods. Unassailable and infatuated by the gift of the boon, he assaults seers, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, and brahmans. The sun does not burn him. The wind will not blow near him. Even the ocean, with its garland of restless waves, dares not stir when he appears. We are terribly afraid of this dreadful-looking *rākṣasa*. Please, lord, devise some means of destroying him."

[12–15] When Brahmā had been addressed in this fashion by all the gods, he reflected for a moment and then spoke: "Ah, the means for destroying this wicked creature has already been ordained. For, when asking for his boon, he used the following words, 'May I be invulnerable to *gandharvas*, *yakṣas*, gods, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas*.' 'So be it,' I replied. In his contempt, that *rākṣasa* neglected to mention men. Therefore, he can be killed by a man. No other means of death is possible for him." When the gods and great seers heard Brahmā's welcome words, they were all delighted.

[16–21] Just then, glorious Viṣṇu arrived, and, joining Brahmā, he stood there in deep contemplation. All of the gods prostrated themselves and praised him. Then they spoke: "In our desire for the welfare of the worlds, we shall set a task for you, Viṣṇu. O lord, King Daśaratha, lord of Ayodhyā, is righteous, generous, and equal in power to the great seers. Viṣṇu, you must divide yourself into four parts and be born as the sons of his three wives, who are like Hrī, goddess of modesty, Śrī, goddess of royal fortune, and Kīrti, goddess of fame. And, Viṣṇu, becoming a man, you must kill Rāvaṇa in battle, that mighty thorn in the side of the world; for he is invulnerable to the gods. This foolish *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa, in the insolence of his power, is oppressing the gods, *gandharvas*, perfected beings, and great

seers. Pluck out this thorn in the side of holy men and ascetics—this haughty Rāvaṇa, swollen with arrogance and might—for he is the bitter enemy of Indra, lord of the thirty gods, a terror to ascetics, and a source of lamentation."

Sarga 15

[1–6] After the principal gods had set this task for Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa, he courteously put a question to them, even though he knew the answer: "O gods, is there some means of slaying the lord of the *rākṣasas* that I might adopt in order to kill that thorn in the side of the seers?" Addressed in this fashion, all the gods replied to the eternal Viṣṇu: "You must take on human form and kill Rāvaṇa in battle. For, foe-conquering hero, he once performed severe and prolonged austerities whereby he won the favor of Brahmā, who made the world and whom the world worships. The lord was so pleased with the *rākṣasa* that he granted him the boon of having nothing to fear from all the various kinds of beings except man. At the time the boon was granted, he left men out of his reckoning. Therefore, destroyer of foes, we foresee that his death must come at the hands of men."

[7–13] When the self-controlled Viṣṇu had heard these words of the gods, he chose King Daśaratha to be his father. Now at that very moment, that splendid king, destroyer of his enemies, in hopes of getting a son, was performing a sacrifice to produce a son, for he had none. And as he sacrificed, there arose from the sacred fire a great being of incomparable radiance, enormous power, and immense might. He was black and clothed in red. His mouth was red, and his voice was like the sound of a war drum. The hair of his body, head, and beard were as glossy as that of a tawny-eyed lion. He bore auspicious marks and was adorned with celestial ornaments. His height was that of a mountain peak, and his gait that of a haughty tiger. His appearance was like that of the sun, maker of day, and he looked like a flame of blazing fire. In his arms he held, as though it were a beloved wife, a broad vessel fashioned of fine gold and covered with a silver lid. It seemed as though it were fashioned directly from creative energy itself, and it was filled with a celestial porridge.

[14–18] Looking straight at King Daśaratha, he said these words: "Your majesty, know that I have come here as a servant of Prajāpati, lord of creatures." In response, the king cupped his hands in reverence and said,

"You are welcome, lord. What may I do for you?" The servant of Prajāpati spoke once more: "Your majesty, you have earned this today through your worship of the gods. Take this porridge, tiger among men. It was prepared by the gods and will bring you offspring, health, and wealth. Give it to those of your wives who are of your own station and bid them eat of it. They will then bear you the sons for the sake of whom you sacrifice, your majesty."

[19–22] The king was delighted, and bowing his head in token of acceptance, said, "So be it," and he took the golden vessel filled with the food of the gods that the gods had given him. He made obeisance to that wonderful being, so pleasing to behold, and in the greatest delight, walked reverently around him. Upon receiving the porridge that the gods had prepared, Daśaratha was as happy as a pauper who has come into money. But that wonderfully radiant and splendid being, having accomplished his mission, vanished on the spot.

[23–28] The apartments of Daśaratha's wives, now lit with beams of joy, seemed like the sky illumined by the rays of the lovely autumnal moon. For the king immediately entered the women's quarters and said to Kausalyā, "Eat this porridge; it will give you a son." Then the lord of men gave half the porridge to Kausalyā. To Sumitrā, the chief of men gave half of a half. For the sake of a son, he gave half of what remained to Kaikeyī. Finally, after giving it some thought, the lord of the earth gave the remaining portion of that ambrosial porridge to Sumitrā. In this fashion did the king apportion the porridge individually among his wives. Those excellent wives of the lord of men regarded themselves as having been highly honored in receiving the porridge, and their hearts leapt up with joy.

Sarga 16

[1–6] When Viṣṇu had gone off in preparation for his birth as the great king's son, Brahmā, the self-existent lord, said this to all the gods: "Create powerful allies able to take on any form at will to aid the hero Viṣṇu, for he is true to his promise and seeks our common good. Let them be heroes and masters of illusion, whose swiftness shall rival that of the wind. They must be intelligent, well versed in statecraft, and equal in valor to Viṣṇu himself. Make them indestructible, well versed in strategy, and gifted with celestial bodies. They must be as skilled in the use of all weapons as are the gods,

who feed on nectar. You must father sons on the principal *apsarases*, *gandharva* women, the daughters of the *yakṣas* and serpents, female apes and monkeys, and the women of the *vidyādharas* and *kinnaras*. Let them have the form of tawny monkeys, but be equal to you in valor."

[7–12] When they had been addressed in this fashion by the lord, they promised to carry out his command. Thus, they fathered sons in the form of monkeys. The great seers, perfected beings, *vidyādharas*, serpents, and celestial bards fathered heroic monkey sons—rangers of the forest. Many thousands of them were born—all valorous heroes, immeasurably strong, able to take on any form at will, and determined to kill ten-necked Rāvaṇa. Apes, monkeys, and langurs were born instantaneously, and so great was their strength, so enormous their bodies, that they resembled elephants or mountains. Each god's son was born equal to his father in build, beauty, and valor. Some of them, famous for their valor, were born to the female langurs. Other monkeys were born to female apes and *kinnara* women.

[13–20] All of them used stones for weapons and wielded trees in battle. Although they mostly fought with teeth and claws, they were skilled in the use of all weapons. They could shake the greatest mountains and could break down firmly rooted trees. Their strength was such that they could make the ocean, lord of rivers, tremble. They could tear up the earth with their feet and could leap even across the mighty ocean. They could hurl themselves into the sky and even grasp the clouds. [a]They could capture rutting elephants roaming in the forest. With the roaring of their mighty voices, they could cause the sky-going birds to fall down from the sky. Ten million such great tawny monkeys were born, leaders of troops who could take on any form at will. In turn, these mighty leaders of troops fathered still more heroic tawny monkeys. Some of them frequented the slopes of Mount Ṛkṣavant, while others inhabited various mountains and forests. But all those lords of the tawny monkeys served the two brothers, Sugrīva, son of Sūrya, and Vālin, Śakra's son. In order to assist Rāma, mighty leaders of monkey troops filled the earth, their bodies terrible to behold, like massed clouds or mountains.

Sarga 17

[1–5] When the great man's *aśvamedha* was completed, the gods accepted their portions and departed as they had come. His state of ritual

consecration now at an end, the king entered the city accompanied by his host of wives, servants, troops, and mounts. The lords of the earth, honored by the king according to their rank, went happily back to their own countries after paying homage to the bull among sages. And when they had departed, the majestic King Daśaratha once more entered the city, preceded by the most eminent of the brahmans. With all due honor, Ṛśyaśṛñga set out with Śāntā, escorted by the wise king and his attendants.

[6–12] Kausalyā gave birth to an illustrious son named Rāma, the delight of the Ikṣvākus. He bore the signs of divinity, for he was one-half of Viṣṇu. An immeasurably resplendent son, he glorified Kausalyā as does Indra, the foremost of the gods and wielder of the *vajra*, his mother, Aditi. Kaikeyī bore a truly valorous son named Bharata, one-quarter of the incarnate Viṣṇu, endowed with every virtue. Sumitrā gave birth to two sons, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna, heroes skilled in all weapons and infused with portions of Viṣṇu. Four great, worthy, and virtuous sons were born to the king, one after the other, equal in beauty to the constellation Proṣṭhapada. On the twelfth day after the births, Daśaratha held the naming ceremony. With great delight, Vasiṣṭha pronounced the names. The eldest and greatest was named Rāma, and Kaikeyī's son was called Bharata. One of Sumitrā's sons was called Lakṣmaṇa and the other Śatrughna. He saw to it that all the ceremonies, beginning with the birth ritual, were performed for them.

[13–18] Of all the king's sons it was the eldest, Rāma, who, like a royal pennant, gave his father the greatest joy. For he was the one among the brothers held in most esteem, just as the self-existent Brahmā is most esteemed among all beings. All of them were heroes, learned in the *vedas* and devoted to the welfare of the people. All were imbued with knowledge and endowed with virtues, but even among such men as these, it was the mighty Rāma who was accounted truly valorous. From earliest childhood Lakṣmaṇa, bringer of glory, was always especially fond of his eldest brother, Rāma, delight of the world. Performing every service for him, glorious Lakṣmaṇa was like another life breath outside his body, for without him, the best of men could get no sleep. Without him, he would not eat the savory food that was brought to him. Whenever Rāghava went out hunting on horseback, he followed behind, guarding him with his bow.

[19–22] Just so did Bharata love Śatrughna, Lakṣmaṇa's younger brother, more than the breath of life itself, while Śatrughna loved him just

as much. Daśaratha took as much joy in his four illustrious and beloved sons as does Brahmā, the Grandfather, in his sons, the gods. When the brothers had completed their education, had cultivated all the virtues, were modest, renowned, wise in the ways of the world, and gifted with foresight, then righteous Daśaratha, with his preceptors and kinsmen, began to give thought to their marriage.

[23–31] While the great man was pondering this in the midst of his counselors, the great and powerful sage Viśvāmitra arrived. Eager to see the king, he said to the gatekeepers, "Announce at once that I, Kauśika, the son of Gādhi, have come." Hearing these words and driven by his command, they all ran to the royal dwelling, their minds in a flurry of agitation. Reaching the palace, they announced to the Ikṣvāku king that the seer Viśvāmitra had come. Upon hearing their words, he was delighted and, dropping all other concerns, went out with his *purohita* to receive him, as Vāsava might for Brahmā. When the king saw that ascetic, rigorous in his vows and blazing with an inner radiance, his face grew joyful, and he made the guest-offering. Receiving the king's guest-offering as prescribed in the *śāstras*, the sage asked the lord of men about his well-being and prosperity. The bull among sages then embraced Vasiṣṭha and the illustrious seers and spoke to them as is customary concerning their health. All of them were glad at heart and entered the king's residence, where, duly honored, they seated themselves according to their rank.

[32–39] Delighted at heart, the noble king spoke to the great sage Viśvāmitra, honoring him: "The acquisition of nectar, rain in the desert, a son born to a childless man by a proper wife, the recovery of something lost, delight in great advancement—your arrival is as welcome to me as all these things. Welcome, great sage. What great desire of yours may I find joy in granting? Righteous brahman, you are a worthy recipient. What luck for me that you have come! Today my birth has borne fruit, and it is clear that I have lived a good life. Possessed of blazing splendor, once you were called a royal seer. But through austerity, you gained a radiant splendor and reached the status of a brahman-seer. Therefore, you are doubly worthy of my homage. This is wonderful, brahman, and highly sanctifying for me. The sight of you, lord, is like a journey to a holy place of pilgrimage. Tell me what cherished purpose has brought you here. If you favor me, I would wish only to aid in the attainment of your goals. You should not hesitate

about what you wish done, Kauśika. I will carry it out fully, for you are as a god to me." When the great and virtuous seer, the fame of whose virtues had spread far and wide, heard these words so pleasant both to heart and ear, so modestly spoken by that wise man, he felt the greatest delight.

Sarga 18

[1–5] When the mighty Viśvāmitra heard this wonderful and elaborate speech of the lion among kings, the hairs on his body bristled with delight, and he replied: "This is characteristic of you alone, tiger among kings, and of no one else on earth, for you were born in a noble House and are guided by Vasiṣṭha. Tiger among kings, you must be true to your promise and resolve to act upon the words that I have in mind. Bull among men, I am engaged in the performance of a ritual in order to accomplish a specific purpose. However, two *rākṣasas*, who can take on any form at will are obstructing me. Now in its final stages, when my sacrifice is all but completed, these *rākṣasas*, Mārīca and Subāhu, who are powerful and well trained, have been drenching the altar with torrents of flesh and blood.

[6–10] "Since my resolution to carry out this sacrifice has been frustrated in such a fashion, I came away in despair, all my efforts gone for nothing. Nor do I intend, your majesty, to unleash my wrath upon them. For the ritual is such that I may utter no curse while it is in progress. Therefore, tiger among kings, you must give me your eldest son, valorous Rāma, who, though he still wears sidelocks, is, nonetheless, a hero. For under my guardianship, he will be able to kill even those obstructive *rākṣasas* through his own godlike power. And you may be certain that I shall give him manifold blessings whereby he will attain renown throughout the three worlds.

[11–14] "Those two, confronted by Rāma, will by no means be able to withstand him, while no man other than Rāghava can possibly kill them. In the arrogance of their strength they have both fallen into the compass of the noose of Kāla. For, tiger among kings, they are no match for the great Rāma. You need not be concerned for your son, your majesty. I give you my word. You can consider those two *rākṣasas* as already slain. I know that Rāma is great and truly valorous, and so do the mighty Vasiṣṭha and these other sages, unwavering in their asceticism.

[15–20] “Best of kings, if you wish to acquire merit and great glory that will endure on earth, you must give me Rāma. If, Kākutstha, all your counselors, the chief of whom is Vasiṣṭha, give their permission, you must let Rāma go. You should freely give me your beloved son, lotus-eyed Rāma, for the ten nights of the sacrifice. It is up to you, Rāghava. Please see to it that the time set for my sacrifice does not slip by. Bless you, do not give your mind over to grief.” When the great sage, the righteous and mighty Viśvāmitra, had uttered these words that accorded so well with both righteousness and statecraft, he fell silent. But when the lord of men heard the sage’s words, which rent his heart and mind, he was overwhelmed with terror and, losing his wits, tottered from his throne.

Sarga 19

[1–5] When that tiger among kings heard what Viśvāmitra had said, he lost consciousness for a moment. Regaining consciousness, he spoke: “My lotus-eyed Rāma is not yet sixteen years of age. I cannot see how he can be fit to do battle with *rākṣasas*. But I have here a vast army of which I am the lord and master. With it, I will go myself to fight these night-roaming *rākṣasas*. My men are all brave heroes, skilled in the use of weapons. They are fit to fight with hosts of *rākṣasas*. Please do not take Rāma. I myself, with bow in hand, shall guard your sacrifices in the front line of battle. I will fight the night-roaming *rākṣasas* as long as I have breath in my body.

[6–11] “Your ritual performance will be well protected and free from obstruction. I shall go there myself. Please do not take Rāma. He is but a boy and not yet finished with his studies. He does not even know a strong foe from a weak one. He is neither strong nor skilled in the use of weapons, and he is not adept at fighting. Surely he is no match for *rākṣasas*, who are known as treacherous fighters. I cannot live even for a moment apart from Rāma. Please, tiger among sages, do not take Rāma. Or, if you still insist on taking Rāghava, brahman strict in your vows, then take me and all four branches of my army with him. I am sixty thousand years old, Kauśika, and he was fathered only with great difficulty. Please do not take Rāma. For of all my four sons, he is my greatest delight. Please do not take Rāma, my eldest and most righteous son.

[12–14] “How powerful are these *rākṣasas*? Who are they? And whose sons are they? How big are they? Who are their protectors, bull among

sages? And how, brahman, may Rāma, my troops, or I best oppose these treacherous fighters, the *rākṣasas*? Tell me all of this, holy man. How am I to stand in battle against these evil creatures? For *rākṣasas* are justly proud of their strength."

[15–18] When Viśvāmitra heard these words, he replied: "There is a *rākṣasa* named Rāvaṇa born in the Paulastya lineage. Having received a boon from Brahmā, he cruelly oppresses the three worlds. He is strong and mighty and always attended by many *rākṣasas*. It is said that this mighty lord of the *rākṣasas*, Rāvaṇa, is actually the brother of Vaiśravaṇa and the son of Viśravas. Whenever this mighty *rākṣasa* is not disrupting sacrifices himself, then two others, the powerful Mārīca and Subāhu, do so at his command."

[19–25] When the king had been addressed in this fashion by the sage, he replied: "Even I cannot stand in battle before that evil creature. You know what is right, please be gracious to my little son. You are both god and *guru* to me, an unfortunate man. Even the gods, *dānavas*, *yakṣas*, great birds, and serpents are unable to withstand Rāvaṇa in battle—what then of men? This *rākṣasa* takes away the might of the mighty in battle. Best of sages, I am unable to do battle with him or with his troops, even if I am accompanied by my troops or my sons. Brahman, by no means will I give you my little son, my child, my godlike boy who knows nothing of warfare. It is the sons of Sunda and Upasunda who are obstructing your sacrifice, and they are like Kāla himself in battle. No, I will not give you my little son. Mārīca and Subāhu are mighty and well trained. With a host of allies, I myself could offer battle to only one of them."

Sarga 20

[1–5] When Kauśika heard these words of the lord of the earth, their syllables slurred through tenderness, he was enraged and made this reply: "First you promise something, then you want to take back the promise! This turnabout is unworthy of the House of the Rāghavas. If you think that this is proper, your majesty, then I will go just as I came, and you, Kākutstha, may rejoice with your kinsmen as one whose word is false." Now when wise Viśvāmitra was seized with fury in this way, the whole earth shook and fear gripped the gods. Seeing that the whole world was stricken with terror, the

great seer Vasiṣṭha, steadfast and true to his vows, said these words to the lord of men:

[6–12] “You were born in the House of the Ikṣvākus and are majestic and true to your vows, like a second Dharma, the god of righteousness, incarnate. You must not forsake the path of righteousness. The Rāghavas are renowned in the three worlds as righteous men. You must follow the tradition of your House and must not resort to unrighteousness. The sacrifices and good works of a man who promises to do something and fails to do so are wasted. Therefore, you must let Rāma go. Whether he is skilled in weapons or not, the *rākṣasas* will not be able to withstand him if he is protected by the son of Kuśika, like nectar by the blazing fire. For Viśvāmitra is righteousness incarnate and the mightiest of men. He is the wisest man in the world and the supreme source of ascetic power. Moreover, he is the master of all divine weapons. No other man in all the three worlds with their fixed and moving contents knows all this, or ever will—not the gods, nor any of the seers, not the *asuras*, the *rākṣasas*, the foremost of the *gandharvas*, the *yakṣas*, the *kinnaras*, nor the great serpents.

[13–19] “For long ago all the divine weapons, Kṛśāśva’s righteous sons, were given to Kauśika when he was still ruling his kingdom. The sons of Kṛśāśva are the sons of the daughters of Prajāpati, lord of creatures. They have various forms and immense power. They are radiant and bring certain victory. Jayā and Suprabhā, the fair-waisted daughters of Dakṣa, gave birth to a hundred brightly shining weapons and divine weapon-spells. First, for the destruction of the armies of the *asuras*, Jayā bore fifty magnificent, immeasurably powerful sons who could take on any form at will. Then Suprabhā gave birth to another fifty unconquerable, unassailable, and extremely powerful sons called the Saṃhāras. Viśvāmitra, the son of Kuśika, knows how to use these divine weapons perfectly. What is more, this man, so learned in the ways of righteousness, can produce new ones. Such is the power of the great ascetic, mighty Viśvāmitra. Your majesty, you need have no anxiety about Rāma’s going.”

Sarga 21

[1–4] When Vasiṣṭha had spoken in this fashion, Daśaratha, with a delighted expression, summoned Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Their father, Daśaratha, and their mothers blessed their journey. Then, when Vasiṣṭha, the *purohita*, had

intoned auspicious hymns of benediction, King Daśaratha kissed his dear son's head and, with a contented heart, gave him into the keeping of the son of Kuśika. Seeing that the lotus-eyed Rāma had been given over to Viśvāmitra, Vāyu, the wind god, blew pleasant to the touch and free from dust.

[5–8] As the great man set out, there was a great shower of blossoms, a beating of the gods' drums, and a great flourish of war drums and conches. Viśvāmitra went first, followed by illustrious Rāma, still wearing sidelocks and armed with a bow. Behind him came Saumitri. Formidable, with their bows in hand, a pair of quivers on their backs, they resembled three-headed cobras. And so, illuminating the ten directions, they followed great Viśvāmitra like the twin Aśvins following Grandfather Brahmā. Radiant, armed with swords, their wrist and finger guards strapped on, they were like twin Kumāras born of the fire following the unimaginable god Sthāṇu.

[9–13] When they had gone a league and a half along the southern bank of the Sarayū, Viśvāmitra called, "Rāma!" and uttered these sweet words: "Come, dear boy, sip this water. Do not let the moment slip by. Accept this set of *mantras* called Balā and Atibalā. You shall suffer neither fever nor fatigue, nor will your beauty ever fade. No evil *rākṣasa* shall ever overcome you, even should you be asleep or off guard. You shall have no equal on earth in strength of arms, nor will you have an equal, Rāma, in all the three worlds. Blameless man, you shall have no equal in the world, in beauty, skill, wisdom, resolve, or ready response.

[14–19] "When you have mastered this pair of spells, you shall be unequaled, for the Balā and Atibalā are the mothers of all wisdom. Rāma, best of men, if you recite the Balā and Atibalā on the road, you shall experience neither hunger nor thirst. Through mastering this pair of spells, Rāghava, your fame will be unequaled on earth. For these two potent spells are the daughters of Grandfather Brahmā. Righteous Kākutstha, you are worthy to be given them. Surely many virtues will accrue to you. Of this there can be no doubt. These spells, which I acquired through austerities, will be of manifold use." Then Rāma purified himself by sipping the water and, with a delighted expression, received the two spells from the great contemplative seer. When he had received the spells, valorous Rāma shone resplendently. Then, after the two brothers had performed for the son of

Kuśika all the duties owing to a *guru*, the three passed the night comfortably on the bank of the Sarayū.

Sarga 22

[1–5] When the night had turned to dawn, the great sage Viśvāmitra spoke to Kākutstha, who was lying on a bed of leaves: “Kausalyā has an excellent child, Rāma. The morning worship is at hand. Get up, tiger among men. We must perform the daily worship of the gods.” Hearing the seer’s noble words, the king’s heroic sons bathed, made the water-offering, and intoned the supreme prayer. After the performance of these daily rites, the two mighty men paid homage to Viśvāmitra, storehouse of asceticism, and, well pleased, set out on their journey. The mighty men went on, and there, at its lovely confluence with the Sarayū, they saw the celestial river Ganges, which goes by three paths.

[6–8] There they came upon the site of a holy ashram belonging to seers of dreadful ascetic power who had been engaged in severe austerities for many thousands of years. When the two Rāghavas saw that holy ashram, they were greatly pleased and spoke to great Viśvāmitra: “Whose holy ashram is this? What man dwells in it? Holy man, we wish to hear about it, for our curiosity is very great.”

[9–13] Hearing their speech, the bull among sages smiled and said: “Rāma, listen to the tale of him whose ashram this once was. He was the embodied Kandarpa, called Kāma by the wise. That fool assailed the lord of gods, Sthāṇu, prior to his marriage, while he was engaged in austerities here, intent upon his vow. The great god, leaving with the host of Maruts, responded by roaring, ‘*Hum*!’ And, delight of the Raghus, Kāma was burned up by his terrible eye, so that all his limbs withered from the fool’s body. When the great god burned him, he destroyed his entire body. In this way, Kāma was rendered bodiless by the lord of the gods in his wrath.

[14–16] “From that time onward, Rāghava, he has been known as Anañga, the disembodied one, and this prosperous region is known as Añga, for it was here that he lost his *añga*, his body. This is Śiva’s holy ashram, and these sages, for whom the highest goal is righteousness, were once his disciples. Hero, there is no sin among them. Let us camp here tonight, handsome Rāma, between the two holy rivers; tomorrow we will make the crossing.”

[17–19] Then, as they stood conversing there, the sages, recognizing them by means of a perception heightened through asceticism, were delighted and experienced great joy. First, they gave the son of Kuśika the guest-offering, water for his feet, and hospitality, and only then did they perform the rites of hospitality for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Received with such honor, they passed the night there comfortably in Kāma's ashram, diverting themselves with stories.

Sarga 23

[1–6] In the clear dawn, the two foe-conquering heroes performed their daily rituals. Then, placing Viśvāmitra before them, they proceeded to the riverbank. There all the great sages, strict in their vows, sent for an excellent boat and spoke to Viśvāmitra: "Please get into the boat, sir, before the king's sons. Go safely on your journey. Let there be no delay." Viśvāmitra said, "So be it," and, paying homage to the seers, set out with the two brothers to cross the river running to the sea. In midstream, Rāma asked the bull among sages, "What is this tumultuous din of clashing waters?" Upon hearing Rāghava's words, so expressive of his curiosity, the righteous sage explained the cause of that sound.

[7–10] "Rāma, on Mount Kailāsa there is a lake that Brahmā produced from his *manas*, 'mind.' Because of this, tiger among men, it is called Lake Mānasa. This river flows down from that lake to embrace the city of Ayodhyā. Indeed, it rises from Brahmā's lake, and since it issues from *saras*, 'lake,' it is called the holy Sarayū, 'Lake Born.' It is this river that is making this incomparable roar through the turmoil of her waters as she rushes into the Jāhnavī. Rāma, focus your thoughts and do them homage." And so the two righteous princes did homage to the two rivers and, reaching the southern bank, went on their way with quick strides.

[11–14] But soon they came to a trackless, dreadful-looking forest, and Rāma Aikṣvāka, son of the best of kings, asked the bull among sages: "What a forbidding forest this is! Echoing with swarms of crickets, it is full of fearsome beasts of prey and harsh-voiced vultures. It is filled with all sorts of birds, screeching fearsome cries, as well as lions, tigers, boars, and elephants. It is full of *dhava*, *aśvakarṇa*, *kakubha*, *bilva*, *tinduka*, *pāṭala*, and *badarī* trees. What is this dreadful forest?"

[15–23] The great and powerful sage Viśvāmitra replied: “Kākutstha, my son, listen as I tell you to whom this dreadful forest belongs. Best of men, once there were two thriving regions here, Malada and Karuṣa, created through the efforts of the gods. Long ago, Rāma, when thousand-eyed Indra killed Vṛtra, he was tainted with the sin of *brahmahatyā*, ‘killing a brahman,’ and overwhelmed by filth and hunger. So the gods and the seers, those repositories of ascetic power, bathed Indra. Cleansing him with water jars, they removed that taint. They then deposited the taint and hunger born of Mahendra’s body here, in these two regions, and so were filled with joy. And when Lord Indra became pure once more, freed from his taint and hunger, he was well pleased and conferred an unsurpassed blessing on this country, saying, ‘These two prosperous regions will achieve fame in the world as Malada, the filthy, and Karuṣa, the famine-ridden, because they bore the taint of my body.’ When the gods saw the honor that wise Śakra had conferred upon the region, they said, ‘Excellent, excellent’ to him, the chastiser of Pāka. Foe-conquering hero, these two districts, Malada and Karuṣa, were prosperous for a long time, rejoicing in wealth and grain.

[24–30] “Now, once upon a time there was a *yakṣa* woman who possessed the strength of a thousand elephants and who could take on any form at will. Tāṭakā they call her, bless you, and she is the wife of wise Sunda. The *rākṣasa* Mārīca, valorous as Śakra, is her son. It is this wicked Tāṭakā, Rāghava, who constantly lays waste to the twin regions of Malada and Karuṣa. She lives a league and a half from here, blocking our path, for we must pass through the forest of Tāṭakā. You must kill this evil one, relying on the strength of your own arms. At my behest, make this region free from thorns once more. For now, Rāma, no one can come to this region—a land made ruinous by this intolerable and terrifying *yakṣa* woman. I have now told you the truth about this dreadful forest, completely ruined by the *yakṣa* woman. To this very day, she keeps up her depredations.”

Sarga 24

[1–2] When the tiger among men had heard the unfathomable sage’s extraordinary speech, he responded in beautiful words: “But how, bull among sages, can a woman of the *yakṣas* possess the strength of a thousand elephants when it is well known that these beings have but little strength?”

[3–7] Viśvāmitra replied: “You shall hear how she came by her extraordinary strength. The strength and power of this woman are the result of a boon. Long ago there was a great *yakṣa* named Suketu. He was powerful and virtuous, and being childless, he undertook great austerities. And so, Rāma, Grandfather Brahmā, well pleased with him, gave the *yakṣa* lord a jewel of a daughter by the name of Tāṭakā. Grandfather Brahmā gave her the strength of a thousand elephants, but the glorious god did not give the *yakṣa* a son. Now when his daughter had grown and reached the height of her youth and beauty, Suketu gave that illustrious woman to Sunda, the son of Jambha, to be his wife.

[8–12] “After some time, the *yakṣa* woman gave birth to an invincible son named Mārīca who, through a curse, was transformed into a *rākṣasa*. After Sunda had been killed, Rāma, Tāṭakā and her son tried to attack Agastya, the greatest of seers. But Agastya cursed Mārīca, saying, ‘May you become a *rākṣasa*!’ And in his towering rage, he cursed Tāṭakā as well: ‘You are now a great *yakṣa* woman, but you shall become a repulsive man-eater with a hideous face. May you lose your present form and take on a truly dreadful one.’ Unable to endure this curse, in her mindless rage she ravages this lovely region, for Agastya used to live here.

[13–19] “Therefore, Rāghava, for the sake of cows and brahmans, you must kill this utterly dreadful and wicked *yakṣa* woman whose valor is employed for evil purposes. No man but you in all the three worlds can kill this accursed creature, delight of the Raghus. Nor, best of men, should you be softhearted about killing a woman. A king’s son must act for the welfare of the four great social orders. This is the immemorial rule for all men charged with the burden of kingship. Kākutstha, you must kill this unrighteous creature, for there is no righteousness in her. For it is said, protector of men, that long ago Śakra killed Mantharā, the daughter of Virocana, who wished to destroy the earth. And, Rāma, long ago, the wife of Bhṛgu, Kāvya’s mother, firm in her vows, who wished to rid the world of Indra, was killed by Viṣṇu. These and many other great and excellent men killed women who were set in the ways of unrighteousness.”

Sarga 25

[1–5] Steadfast in his vows, Rāghava, son of the best of men, heard the sage’s manly speech. Then, cupping his hands in reverence, he spoke: “In

Ayodhyā, in the presence of my elders, my father, great Daśaratha, gave me this command: 'You must do as Kauśika tells you without hesitation.' Because of the respect due a father's words, because a father's words are commands, I may not disregard what he said. Since I heard my father's words and since it is also the command of a man learned in the *vedas*, I shall without question undertake the eminently justifiable action of killing Tāṭakā. For the sake of cows and brahmans, to bring happiness to this region, and to please you, unfathomable sage, I stand ready to do as you say."

[6–8] When the foe-conquering hero had spoken in this fashion, he grasped the middle of his bow with his fist and made a piercing noise with the bowstring, filling the four directions with the sound. The sound terrified the inhabitants of Tāṭakā's forest, enraging and confusing Tāṭakā herself. When the *rākṣasa* woman heard that sound, she was beside herself with rage. Locating its source, she ran swiftly to the place from which the sound had come.

[9–12] Seeing her in such a rage, looking so hideous with her hideous face and grown to such an extraordinary size, Rāghava said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Lakṣmaṇa, look at the fearsome and dreadful body of this *yakṣa* woman. The hearts of the timid would burst at the very sight of her. Look at her. She seems unassailable, armed as she is with power of illusion. But I shall send her back without her ears and the tip of her nose. I dare not actually kill her, for being a woman, she is protected. My intention is merely to deprive her of her strength and her lair."

[13–22] But even as Rāma was speaking in this fashion, Tāṭakā lifted her arms and charged him, bellowing. As she hurled herself upon him, as swift and powerful as a bolt of lightning, he shot her in the chest with an arrow, so that she fell and died. Seeing the frightful-looking creature slain, the lord of the gods, and the gods as well, honored Kākutstha, crying, "Well done! Well done!" Thousand-eyed Indra, the smasher of citadels, was greatly pleased. With all the gods, who were similarly delighted, he spoke to Viśvāmitra: "Bless you, Kauśika sage. All of us, Indra, and the hosts of Maruts are gratified by this deed. You should demonstrate your affection for Rāghava. Brahman, you should confer upon Rāghava the sons of Kṛśāśva, lord of creatures, who are truly valorous and filled with power acquired through austerity. Since he has been so steadfast in following you, the

king’s son is a worthy recipient for your gift, brahman. Moreover, he still has a great deed to do on behalf of the gods.” When the gods had spoken in this fashion, they all did homage to Viśvāmitra and, in delight, went off as they had come. Soon twilight came on. Then the foremost of sages, pleased and gratified by the slaying of Tāṭakā, kissed Rāma on the head and said: “We shall make camp here tonight, handsome Rāma. Tomorrow at dawn we shall go to the site of my ashram.”

Sarga 26

[1–5] And then, the renowned Viśvāmitra, having passed the night, smiled as he spoke these sweet-syllabled words to Rāghava: “Bless you, prince of great renown. I am fully satisfied with you. Since I feel such great affection for you, I shall give you the divine weapons. Bless you, I shall give you all these weapons. With them you shall forcefully subdue your enemies, defeating them in battle even though they be the hosts of the gods and the *asuras* together with the *gandharvas* and the great serpents. Rāghava, I shall give you the great celestial Daṇḍa discus. Then, hero, I shall give you the Dharma discus and the Kāla discus, also Viṣṇu’s discus, which is very terrible, and the discus of Indra.

[6–10] “Best of men, I shall give you the divine weapon known as the Vajra and the best of lances, which is Śiva’s. Great-armed Rāghava, I shall give you the divine weapons known as Brahmaśiras and Aiṣīka, as well as the greatest weapon of all, Brahmā’s weapon. In addition, Prince Kākutstha, tiger among men, I shall give you two shining maces called Modakī and Śikharī, and I shall give you the noose of Dharma and the noose of Kāla. And I shall give you Varuṇa’s noose, a weapon surpassed by none. I shall also give you two *vajras*, delight of the Raghus, Śuṣka and Ārdra. And I shall give you Pinākin’s weapon, the weapon belonging to Nārāyaṇa, and the favorite weapon of Agni, which is known as Śikhara.

[11–15] “Also, Rāghava, you shall have Vāyu’s weapon, which is called Prathama, the weapon called Hayaśiras, and the one called Krauñca. Blameless Kākutstha, I shall give you two javelins, the terrible cudgel called Kañkāla, and the weapons known as Kāpāla and Kañkaṇa. All those weapons that the *asuras* bear and the great weapon of the *vidyādharas* called Nandana shall be yours. Great-armed prince, I shall give you a jewel of a sword, the favorite weapon of the *gandharvas*, which is called Mānava.

Rāghava, I shall give you the weapons called Prasvāpana, Praśamana, Saura, Darpaṇa, Śoṣaṇa, Saṃtāpana, and Vilāpana.

[16–19] “You are the renowned son of a king, a tiger among men. Therefore, accept Kandarpa’s favorite weapon, the irresistible Madana, and the favorite weapon of the *piśācas*, which is called Mohana. Prince and tiger among men, accept also the following weapons: the Tāmasa, the mighty Saumana, the irresistible Saṃvarta, and the Mausala. Great-armed warrior, accept the Satya weapon, the great Māyādhara, and the terrible weapon called Tejaḥprabhā, which robs enemies of their power. Finally, you must accept Soma’s weapon, the Śiśira, Tvaṣṭṛ’s weapon, Sudāmana, Bhaga’s Dāruṇa, and Manu’s Śīteṣu.

[20–25] “Rāma, great-armed prince, you should accept these weapons at once, for they are very powerful. They can take on any form at will and will bring you all that you desire.” The best of sages then purified himself and, facing the east, imparted to Rāma with great pleasure the unsurpassed set of *mantras*. Even as the wise sage Viśvāmitra was intoning the spells, all those precious weapons presented themselves before Rāghava. With great delight they all cupped their hands in reverence and spoke to Rāma, “Here are your servants, noble Rāghava.” Kākutstha touched them with his hand in token of acceptance and enjoined them, “You must come to me whenever I call you to mind.” Then mighty Rāma was pleased at heart. Respectfully saluting Viśvāmitra, he set out once more on his journey.

Sarga 27

[1–2] As Kākutstha was setting out, after having purified himself and having accepted the weapons, he spoke to Viśvāmitra with an expression of delight on his face: “Since I have accepted these weapons, holy man, I have become invincible even to the gods. But, bull among sages, I still have need of spells for the recovery of the weapons.”

[3–9] As Kākutstha was speaking in this fashion, the great sage, pure, steadfast, and true to his word, intoned the spells of recovery. “Satyavant, Satyakīrti, Dhṛṣṭa, Rabhasa, Pratihāratara, Parāñmukha, Avāñmukha, Lakṣākṣa, Viṣama, Dṛḍhanābha, Sunābhaka, Daśākṣa, Śatavaktra, Daśaśīrṣa, Śatodara, Padmanābha, Mahānābha, Dundunābha, Sunābhaka, Jyotiṣa, Kṛśana, Nairāśya, Vimala, Yaugandhara, Haridra, Daitya, Pramathana, Pitrya, Saumanasa, Vidhūta, Makara, Karavīrakara, Dhana,

Dhānya, Kāmarūpa, Kāmaruci, Moha, Āvaraṇa, Jṛmbhaka, Sarvanābha, Santāna, and Varaṇa: these are the radiant sons of Kṛśāśva, able to take on forms at will. Please accept them from me, Rāghava; for you are a worthy recipient of them."

[10–13] Kākutstha, his heart delighted, replied, "I will indeed!" Then, right before Rāma's eyes, the spells took shape with radiant, celestial bodies, inspiring joy. Cupping their hands in reverence, they spoke sweetly to Rāma: "We have come, tiger among men. Command us. What may we do for you?" The delight of the Raghus said to them: "You may go as you wish for now. But keep yourselves in readiness until I call you to mind. At such times, when there is some deed to be done, you must come to my aid." "So be it," they replied. Then, walking reverently around Rāma Kākutstha, they took their leave of him and departed as they had come.

[14–18] As Rāghava walked on after having mastered the spells, he spoke these sweet and agreeable words to the great sage Viśvāmitra: "From here I can see a dense mass of trees like a dark cloud over near that mountain. What is it? I am very curious about it. It is lovely and quite charming, full of deer and adorned with all kinds of sweet-voiced birds. I gather from the pleasantness of this region, best of sages, that we have emerged from that terrifying forest. Tell me all about it, holy one. Whose ashram is located here? Is this the place where we shall find those sinful and wicked killers of brahmans?"

Sarga 28

[1–3] Since peerless Rāma was so curious about the forest, the mighty Viśvāmitra began to explain: "This was once the ashram of the great Dwarf. It is known as the Ashram of the Perfected Being, for it was here that that great ascetic attained perfection. At that time, the famous King Bali Vairocana had defeated the hosts of the gods, including Indra and the Marut hosts, and had established his sovereignty throughout the three worlds.

[4–8] "Then, while Bali was engaged in the performance of a sacrifice, the gods themselves, led by Agni, assembled here in this ashram and addressed Viṣṇu. 'O Viṣṇu, Bali Vairocana is performing a great sacrifice. Our objective must be achieved before he completes this rite. He is giving away virtually everything he has—whatever, wherever, and however much it may be—to anyone who comes to him from anywhere asking for a gift.

Through your yogic power of illusion, you must become a dwarf, Viṣṇu, and accomplish a great and auspicious feat for the sake of the gods. When you have accomplished this task, lord of the gods, this place will, by your grace, be called the Ashram of the Perfected Being. Lord, please go forth from here.'

[9–14] "Then mighty Viṣṇu, taking on the form of a dwarf, was born of Aditi and approached Vairocana. He begged as much land as he could traverse in three paces and accepted it respectfully. Then that supreme divinity of all the world, intent upon the welfare of all beings, traversed the worlds. Exerting his power, the mighty god bound Bali and gave the three worlds back to the great lord Śakra, making them once more subject to his sway. Since the Dwarf himself once dwelt here, this ashram allays all weariness. Now, because of my devotion to him, it has become mine. But of late, *rākṣasas* have been coming to this ashram to interfere with me, and it is here, tiger among men, that you must kill these evildoers. Let us go now, Rāma, to the unsurpassed Ashram of the Perfected Being. For this ashram is as much yours as mine, my son."

[15–20] Catching sight of Viśvāmitra, all the sages who dwelt in the Ashram of the Perfected Being leapt up at once and did him homage. And when they had paid wise Viśvāmitra homage he deserved, they performed the rites of hospitality for the two princes. Then, when the two foe-conquering princes, delights of the Raghus, had rested for a while, they cupped their hands in reverence and spoke to the tiger among sages: "Bless you, bull among sages, you may enter a state of consecration immediately, if you wish. Let your words be proven true, and the Ashram of the Perfected Being become truly a place of perfection." When he had been addressed in this fashion, the great sage, mighty Viśvāmitra, controlling himself and subduing his senses, entered a state of consecration. But the two princes spent the night intent upon their duty. Arising in the morning, they praised Viśvāmitra.

Sarga 29

[1–6] Mindful of the time and place, the two eloquent and foe-conquering princes then and there addressed Kauśika: "Holy brahman, we want to know when we are supposed to ward off the two night-roaming *rākṣasas*, lest we miss the proper moment." As the Kākutstha princes were speaking

in this fashion, impatient in their desire to fight, all the sages, delighted, said to them: “You two Rāghavas must stand guard for six nights starting today. The sage is in a state of consecration and so must remain silent.” Upon hearing their words, the renowned princes guarded the ascetics’ forest for six days and nights, never sleeping. In this way, the two foe-conquering heroes attended upon Viśvāmitra, best of sages, wielding their mighty bows and guarding him with unwavering vigilance.

[7–13] Then, when the time had passed and the sixth day had come, Rāma said to Saumitri, “Be alert and vigilant.” And, just as Rāma was saying this, impatient in his desire to fight, the altar, tended by their preceptor and *purohitas*, suddenly blazed up. And though the sacrifice was proceeding in accordance with the ritual precepts, to the accompaniment of vedic hymns, a loud and terrifying noise was heard in the sky. Suddenly, like clouds in the rainy season, two *rākṣasas*, changing their shapes through the power of illusion and blotting out the sky, hurled themselves upon them. Thus did Mārīca, Subāhu, and their ghastly followers appear, pouring down torrents of blood. Seeing them violently rushing on, lotus-eyed Rāma turned to Lakṣmaṇa and said, “Lakṣmaṇa, watch as I scatter these evil, flesh-eating *rākṣasas* with the Mānava weapon just as the wind scatters clouds.”

[14–18] Then, in a towering rage, Rāghava fired the noble and radiant Mānava weapon at Mārīca’s breast. Struck by the great Mānava weapon, he was hurled into the ocean’s flood a full hundred leagues away. Seeing Mārīca hurled back, writhing and unconscious, and crushed by the force of the Śīteṣu weapon, Rāma spoke to Lakṣmaṇa: “Lakṣmaṇa, observe that, although Manu’s Śīteṣu, a weapon inseparable from righteousness, has stunned him and carried him away, he is not dead. But I shall kill these other pitiless and vicious *rākṣasas*, for they are set in their wicked ways, obstructing sacrifices, and drinking blood.”

[19–23] The delight of the Raghus then took up the immensely powerful Āgneya weapon and fired it at Subāhu’s breast. Pierced to the heart, he fell to earth. The noble and renowned Rāghava then took up the Vāyavya weapon and with it killed the rest of them, bringing joy to the sages. When the delight of the Raghus had killed all those *rākṣasas* who were obstructing the sacrifice, he was honored by the seers there, just as was Indra long ago on the occasion of his victory. His sacrifice at last completed, Viśvāmitra, seeing that all directions were free from those pests,

said this to Kākutstha: “Great-armed warrior, I have accomplished my purpose. And you have carried out the orders of your father. Renowned Rāma, you have made this truly an ashram of a perfected being.”

Sarga 30

[1–7] The heroes Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, delighted to have accomplished their purpose, spent the night there with contentment in their hearts. Then, when the night had given way to bright dawn, the two of them performed their morning rituals and together approached Viśvāmitra and the other seers. They made obeisance to the eminent sage, who was blazing like fire, the purifier, and speaking sweetly, they uttered words both noble and sweet: “Here are your servants, tiger among sages, standing before you. Command us as you wish. What order shall we carry out?” When the two princes had spoken in this fashion, all the great seers, led by Viśvāmitra, said these words to Rāma: “Janaka, the lord of Mithilā, is about to perform a sacrifice, the highest expression of righteousness; and we are going there, best of men. You should come with us, tiger among men, for you ought to see the wonderful jewel of a bow he has there.

[8–12] “Long ago, at a sacrifice, best of men, the gods presented him—right there in the sacred enclosure—with an awesome, radiant, and immeasurably powerful bow. Not even the gods, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, and *rākṣasas* are able to string it, much less a man. Although kings and mighty princes, eager to test the strength of the bow, have tried, none have been able to string it. There, tiger among men, you shall see this bow of the great lord of Mithilā. Moreover, Kākutstha, you shall witness his sacrifice, a wonder to behold. Tiger among men, the lord of Mithilā begged that superb bow with its splendid grip from all the gods as a reward for his earlier sacrifice.”

[13–18] When the foremost of sages had spoken in this fashion, he set out with the Kākutsthas and the host of seers, first paying his respects to the divinities of the forest: “Farewell to you. Since I have become perfected, I shall leave the Ashram of the Perfected Being for the Himalaya mountains on the northern shore of Jāhnavī, the Ganges.” Then, after making an auspicious circuit of the unsurpassed Ashram of the Perfected Being, he set out for the north. As the foremost of sages set forth, a hundred carts full of his followers—all men learned in the *vedas*—followed him in procession.

Even the flocks of birds and herds of deer that lived in the Ashram of the Perfected Being followed in the train of the great sage Viśvāmitra. When they had traveled far on the road and the sun, the maker of day, was sinking low, the host of sages, their minds composed, made camp on the banks of the river Śoṇā.

[19–23] Once the sun, maker of day, had set, those immeasurably mighty men bathed and made offerings into the fire, eater of oblations. Then they seated themselves, following Viśvāmitra's lead. But Rāma and Saumitri first did homage to the sages and only then sat down before wise Viśvāmitra. Then mighty Rāma, filled with curiosity, questioned the great sage Viśvāmitra, tiger among sages: "Holy sage, what region is this so graced with lush forests? I want to know all about it. Please tell me the truth." Prompted by Rāma's words, the great ascetic, true to his vows, related, in the midst of the seers, the entire history of that region.

Sarga 31

[1–5] "One of the sons of Brahmā was a great ascetic named Kuśa. He, in turn, fathered four worthy sons on a woman of Vidarbha, and their names were Kuśāmba, Kuśanābha, Ādhūrtarajasa, and Vasu. In his desire to see such radiant, vigorous, righteous, and truthful sons fulfill the duties of the kshatriya class, Kuśa said to them, 'My sons, you must rule kingdoms. For only thus will you fully discharge your duty.' Then, when those four fine men, honored by all, heard these words of Kuśa, they went forth and founded cities. Mighty Kuśāmba founded the city of Kauśāmbī, while righteous Kuśanābha established the city of Mahodaya. King Ādhūrtarajasa founded Dharmāraṇya, Rāma, foremost of cities, and King Vasu founded Girivraja.

[6–12] "Rāma, this rich land belongs to great Vasu. Those five splendid hills surround it. This lovely river flows toward Magadha and therefore is known as the Sumāgadhī. It is as beautiful as a garland, nestled among the five splendid hills. Rāma, this is indeed the river Māgadhī belonging to great Vasu. Garlanded with grain, it flows east through rich farmlands. But, delight of the Raghus, as for the righteous royal seer Kuśanābha, he fathered a hundred incomparably beautiful daughters on Ghṛtācī. Youthful, beautiful, and richly ornamented, resembling lightning in the rains, they went one day to a park. Adorned with the most exquisite ornaments,

singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments, they enjoyed themselves immensely, Rāghava. Their every limb was beautiful, and indeed, there was no one on earth whose loveliness was like theirs. There in the park they looked like stars shining among the clouds.

[13–19] "Vāyu, the wind god, who dwells in everyone, seeing that they possessed every virtue, youth, and beauty, addressed them: 'I desire all of you. You shall be my wives. Give up your mortal state and gain eternal life.' But when the hundred girls heard those words of tireless Vāyu, they replied in tones of mockery: 'Best of gods, you move inside all creatures and know their various powers. How dare you then treat us with disrespect? Best of gods, we are the daughters of Kuśanābha. Any of us could send you toppling from your lofty state, god though you be, did we not prefer to preserve the power of our austerities. Fool! May such a thing never happen! We shall never disregard the wishes of our truthful father and choose a husband for ourselves on our own account! For our father is our lord and our supreme divinity. That man alone will be our husband to whom our father gives us.'

[20–22] "Now, when the holy Lord Vāyu heard those words, he was furiously angry and, entering into every one of their limbs, he twisted them. Twisted by Vāyu, the girls entered the king's residence, and when the king saw that they were so distorted, he was distraught and cried: 'What is this? Speak, my daughters. Who has dared to so violate the laws of propriety? Who has turned all of you into hunchbacks? Though you all gesticulate wildly, you do not speak.' "

Sarga 32

[1–4] "When wise Kuśanābha's hundred daughters heard his words, they touched his feet with their heads and replied: 'Your Majesty, Vāyu, who lives in all creatures, wishes to ruin us by approaching us in an improper manner. He has no regard whatever for what is proper. But we told him: "We have a father, thank you, we are not free agents. Go and ask our father if he will give us to you." And even as we were speaking in this fashion, we were all sorely afflicted by Vāyu, who meant us no good and would not heed our words.'

[5–10] "When the righteous and mighty king heard the words of his hundred peerless daughters, he replied: 'Daughters, you have shown

extraordinary forbearance, which is the duty of the meek. In your unanimity you have shown your respect for my family. Forbearance is an adornment to women as well as men, and such forbearance as yours is hard to achieve, especially in the face of the thirty gods. And your forbearance is such, my daughters, that it belongs to all of you equally. Forbearance is charity; forbearance is sacrifice; forbearance is truth, my daughters. Forbearance is glory; forbearance is righteousness. The world itself is founded on forbearance.' And so saying, Kākutstha, the king, equal in valor to the thirty gods, dismissed his daughters. Skillful in counsel, he conferred with his counselors about giving them away in marriage. They discussed the proper time and place for giving them and a suitable person to whom to give them.

[11–14] "Now in those days, there lived a great sage named Cūlin. Retaining his semen and pure in his conduct, he had undertaken austerities as enjoined in the *vedas*. Bless you, a *gandharva* woman named Somadā, the daughter of Ūrmilā, was once attending upon that seer while he was engaged in his austerities. This extremely righteous woman dwelt there for some time worshiping him and wholly devoted to his service, so that this *guru* was pleased with her. So, delight of the Raghus, at an appropriate moment he spoke to her, saying, 'Bless you, I am pleased with you. What favor may I do for you?'

[15–18] "When she understood that the sage was pleased, the *gandharva* woman was very happy, and since she knew how to speak well, she addressed him, who was similarly eloquent, in sweet words: 'You are suffused with the splendor of Brahman, a mighty ascetic who has attained Brahman. Therefore, I desire a righteous son who shall be filled with the ascetic power of Brahman. Bless you, I have no husband. I am nobody's wife. So, since I have approached you in the manner prescribed in the *vedas*, please give me a son.' The brahman-seer Cūlin was pleased with her, and so he granted her an unsurpassed son known as Brahmadatta, a son born directly from his mind.

[19–26] "And this Brahmadatta, who was a king, dwelt in the city of Kāmpilyā in the greatest royal splendor, like the king of the gods in heaven. It was upon this same Brahmadatta that righteous King Kuśanābha decided to bestow his hundred daughters. So that mighty king, lord of the earth, summoned Brahmadatta and with delight in his heart, gave him his hundred daughters. Thus, it came about, delight of the Raghus, that the lord of the

earth, Brahmadatta, who was like the lord of the gods, took their hands in due order. And no sooner had he touched their hands than all the hundred maidens became radiant with great beauty, free from crookedness, and free from sorrow. Seeing that Vāyu had released them, Kuśanābha, lord of the earth, was overjoyed and rejoiced again and again. The lord of the earth then dismissed the newlywed king and his wives, as well as his host of preceptors. The *gandharva* woman Somadā too was greatly delighted to see this ceremony that was so fitting for her son, and she welcomed her daughters-in-law as custom demanded."

Sarga 33

[1–6] "When Brahmadatta had married and departed, Rāghava, Kuśanābha, who still had no son, performed the son-producing rite for the sake of getting one. While this sacrifice was going on, Kuśa, the son of Brahmā, highly pleased, spoke to Kuśanābha, lord of the earth: 'My son, you shall have a worthy and most righteous son who will be called Gādhi, and through him you shall gain enduring fame in the world.' After speaking in this fashion to Kuśanābha, lord of the earth, Kuśa flew off into the sky and returned to the eternal Brahmaloka. Some time after this, a most righteous son named Gādhi was born to the wise Kuśanābha. Righteous Gādhi is my father, Kākutstha, for I am a Kauśika, delight of the Raghus, born in the House of Kuśa.

[7–12] "I have also an older sister, true to her vows, Rāghava, and known as Satyavatī. She was given in marriage to Ṛcīka. Following her husband, she went to heaven in her earthly body. This noble Kauśika woman was then transformed into a mighty river. A lovely goddess with holy waters, my sister, rises from the Himalayas and flows forth in her desire for the welfare of the world. Therefore, delight of the Raghus, since I am deeply attached to my sister Kauśikī, I shall dwell happily in the vicinity of the Himalayas with my senses under strict control. For the holy and illustrious Satyavatī, firmly established in truth and righteousness, and deeply devoted to her husband, is none other than the Kauśikī, foremost of rivers. It was only for the sake of my sacrifice that I left her, Rāma, and came away. And it is owing to your might alone that I was myself able to become a perfected being in the Ashram of the Perfected Being.

[13–20] “This then, Rāma, is the story of my family and of my birth. Also, since you asked me about it, great-armed man, I have related to you the history of this region. But half the night has passed away, Kākutstha, while I have been telling these stories. Bless you, go to sleep, lest this be a hindrance to our journey. The trees are perfectly still, delight of the Raghus, all beasts and birds have settled in their nests, and all directions are suffused with the dark of night. The twilight is slowly fading. The sky, thick with stars and planets, is shining with lights as though it were filled with eyes. And, my lord, the cool-rayed moon is rising, dispelling the darkness of the world and gladdening with his radiance the hearts of all its creatures, while here and there, the creatures of the night—dreadful hordes of *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas* hungry for flesh—are roaming.” When the great and mighty sage had spoken in this fashion, he paused, and all the sages applauded him, crying, “Excellent! Excellent!” Rāma and Saumitri too were amazed by what they had heard. Praising the tiger among sages, they settled down to sleep.

Sarga 34

[1–6] Viśvāmitra passed the remainder of the night with the great seers on the bank of the river Śoṇā. Then, as the night was giving way to bright dawn, he said: “Rāma, the night has given way to dawn. It is time for the morning devotions. Arise, bless you, arise! Make ready to depart.” Upon hearing these words, Rāma performed his morning rituals, and when he was ready to go, he said, “The limpid Śoṇā is shallow and studded with sand bars. Which way shall we cross, brahman?” Questioned by Rāma in this fashion, Viśvāmitra said, “I have already pointed out the path. It is the one by which the great seers are crossing.” Later, when half the day had passed and they had traveled a long way, they came to the Jāhnavī, the Ganges, most excellent of rivers and constant resort of sages.

[7–11] When they saw her holy waters, thronged with *haṃsas* and *sārasa* cranes, all the sages and the two Rāghavas were delighted. They made camp on her bank, bathed, and made offerings of water to the gods and their departed ancestors as is prescribed in the ritual texts. They then performed the *agnihotra* rite and ate of the oblation that was like nectar. Then, their hearts delighted, they sat down on the holy shore of the Jāhnavī, surrounding the great Viśvāmitra on every side. With a glad heart, Rāma

spoke to Viśvāmitra, “Holy man, I wish to learn about the Ganges, the river that goes by three paths. How does she traverse the three worlds to come at last to the ocean, lord of rivers and streams?” Prompted by Rāma’s words, the great sage Viśvāmitra began to tell of the origin and greatness of the Ganges.

[12–17] “There is a lordly mountain, a vast mine of metals, called Himalaya, Rāma, and he has two daughters unequaled on earth in beauty. Their mother, Rāma, Himalaya’s lovely and beloved wife, was Menā, fair-waisted daughter of Mount Meru. The Ganges, eldest daughter of Himalaya, was born to her, Rāghava, after which he had a second daughter named Umā. In their desire to effect a divine purpose, the gods asked that lord of mountains for his eldest daughter, Ganges, the river that goes by three paths. In the interests of righteousness and his desire for the welfare of the three worlds, Himalaya gave away the Ganges, his daughter who purifies the worlds and moves freely by any path. Acting for the good of the world and for the sake of the three worlds, the gods accepted her and, having accomplished their hearts’ desire, they took the Ganges and departed.

[18–21] “But, delight of the Raghus, the other daughter of the mountain was an ascetic maiden who undertook a dreadful vow and practiced austerity. The foremost of mountains gave this daughter, Umā, possessed of fierce ascetic power and worshiped by the world, in marriage to the incomparable Rudra. These, then, delight of the Raghus, are the daughters of the mountain king: Ganges, most excellent of rivers, and the goddess Umā. All the world worships them. Now, my fleet-footed son, I have told you all about how the river that goes by three paths went first by the path of the sky.”

Sarga 35

[1–5] When the sage had finished speaking, both heroes, Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa, applauded his tale and addressed that bull among sages: “This is a wonderful and edifying tale you have told, brahman. You are familiar with these matters in detail; so please tell us the details of the origins, both in heaven and in the world of men, of the eldest daughter of the mountain king. Why does she who sanctifies the worlds sanctify three paths? How is it that the Ganges, most excellent of rivers, is known throughout the three

worlds as Tripathagā, 'She Who Goes by Three Paths'? You know the ways of righteousness; please tell us of the great events with which she is associated." When Kākutstha had finished speaking in this fashion, the ascetic Viśvāmitra told the full story in the midst of the seers, omitting nothing.

[6–11] "Long ago, Rāma, when the great ascetic, black-throated Śiva, had gotten married, he looked with desire upon the goddess and began to make love to her. Thus engaged, the black-throated god passed a hundred years of the gods. But even so, foe-consuming Rāma, the goddess conceived no child. By that time the gods, led by Grandfather Brahmā, had become alarmed and thought, 'Who will be able to withstand the being who will be born from this union?' Drawing near, all the gods prostrated themselves and spoke: 'Great god, god of gods, you are devoted to the welfare of this world. Please be gracious to the gods who have fallen at your feet. Best of gods, the worlds cannot contain your semen. You should, instead, together with the goddess, perform the austerities prescribed in the *vedas*. For the sake of the three worlds, you must retain your semen in your body. You should protect all these worlds, not destroy them.'

[12–18] "When the great lord of all the worlds heard the words of the gods, he said, 'Very well.' Then he spoke to them further: 'With the help of Umā, I shall retain the semen in my body. Let the thirty gods and the earth rest easy. But tell me this, great gods: who will contain such of my incomparable semen as has already been dislodged from its place?' Addressed in this fashion, the gods replied to Śiva, whose standard is the bull, 'The Earth will bear the semen that has been dislodged.' And so, when they had addressed him in this fashion, the lord of gods released his semen upon the Earth, thereby filling it up, together with its mountains and forests. Then the gods spoke to Agni, the eater of oblations, saying, 'You and Vāyu must enter Rudra's abundant semen.' Once permeated by Agni, it was transformed into a white mountain on which there was a celestial thicket of white reeds that looked like the sun surrounded by fire. It was there that Kārtikeya came into being, born from fire.

[19–26] "Then the gods and the hosts of seers were delighted at heart and worshiped Umā and Śiva. But the daughter of the mountain was enraged, Rāma. Her eyes red with anger, she spoke to the gods, cursing them: 'Since I have been thwarted while making love in the hopes of

begetting a son, you shall be unable to father children upon your own wives. From this day forward, your wives shall remain childless.’ After addressing all the gods in this fashion, she cursed the Earth as well: ‘O Earth, you shall be manifold in form and the wife of many. Moreover, since you did not want my son, you evil-minded creature, you shall never experience a mother’s love for a son, defiled as you are by my anger.’ When the lord of gods had seen all the gods thus put to shame, he set out for the west, the direction guarded by Varuṇa. There the great lord and the goddess undertook austerities on the northern slope of a mountain peak in the Himalayas. I have now told you the story of the mountain’s daughter in detail, Rāma. Next you and Lakṣmaṇa shall hear from me the tale of the origin of the Ganges.”

Sarga 36

[1–8] “Long ago, while the god Śiva was engaged in austerities, the gods and hosts of seers, wishing to find a leader for their army, approached Grandfather Brahmā. Indra and all the gods made Agni, the god of fire, their spokesman, and prostrating themselves, they spoke these eloquent words to the Grandfather, their lord: ‘Lord, he whom you long ago gave us to lead our army has taken to extreme asceticism and is now engaged in austerities with Umā. You know how to arrange things. Arrange something for us to do next in our desire for the welfare of the worlds. You are our last recourse.’ Upon hearing the gods’ words, the grandfather of all the worlds comforted them with soothing words, saying: ‘What the mountain’s daughter said, that you will never father children on your wives, is inviolable truth. Let there be no doubt about this. But here is the Ganges who moves through the sky. Agni, the eater of oblations, will father on her a son who will be a foe-conquering commander for the army of the gods. The eldest daughter of the mountain lord will acknowledge that son. There can be no doubt that Umā will accept this.’

[9–14] “When the gods had heard Grandfather Brahmā’s words, and had thus accomplished their purpose, delight of the Raghus, they all bowed low and worshiped him. Then all the gods proceeded to Mount Kailāsa, adorned with metallic ores, and charged Agni, the god of fire, with the task of begetting a son, saying: ‘O lord, eater of oblations, you must carry out this task of the gods. Great is your splendor. You must release the semen into

the Ganges, the daughter of the mountain.' Agni, the purifier, promised the gods he would do this, and so, approaching the Ganges, he said, 'Bear this embryo, goddess, as a favor to the gods.' Upon hearing these words, she assumed her divine form, and he, seeing her extraordinary beauty, scattered the semen all over. Agni, the purifier, showered it all over the goddess, so that all the channels of the Ganges were filled with it, delight of the Raghus.

[15–20] "Then the Ganges spoke to him, Agni, *purohita* of all the gods: 'O God, I cannot bear your powerful semen. A fire is burning me, and my mind is confused.' The eater of all the gods' oblations replied to the Ganges: 'Let the embryo be placed at the foot of the Himalayas.' When the mighty Ganges heard Agni's words, blameless man, she released the unbearably brilliant embryo from her channels. Since it had emerged from her, it had the luster of molten gold, and as it touched the earth it turned to gold and silver, pure and beautiful. From its acrid quality, copper and iron were produced, while its impurities became tin and lead. Thus, when it touched the earth, it turned into the various elements.

[21–25] "The moment the embryo was set down, the whole mountain forest was pervaded by its splendor and turned to gold. And ever since that time, Rāghava, tiger among men, gold, lustrous as Agni, eater of oblations, has been known as Jātarūpa, 'Formed at Birth.' As soon as the boy was born, Indra and all the Marut hosts engaged the Kṛttikās to provide sufficient milk for him. They offered him milk as soon as he was born, and came to an excellent arrangement, saying, 'He shall be the son of all of us.' It was for this reason that all the gods called him Kārtikeya, saying, 'There can be no doubt but that this child will be famous throughout the three worlds.'

[26–29] "When the Kṛttikās heard those words, they bathed the child who had been emitted in that outpouring of the embryonic waters shining with the greatest splendor, like fire. And, Kākutstha, since that illustrious and fiery Kārtikeya had been emitted in that outpouring of embryonic waters, the gods called him Skanda, 'Emission.' Then all six Kṛttikās put forth wonderful milk, and he grew six heads to take it as it sprang from their breasts. After that lord had drunk their milk for but a single day, he conquered the hosts of *daitya* warriors through his own might, though his form was that of a tender young boy. Because of that, the hosts of the gods assembled and, making Agni, the god of fire, their spokesman, consecrated

him, whose radiance was unblemished, as commander of the hosts of the gods. And so, Rāma, I have told you the detailed history of the Ganges and also of the auspicious and holy birth of Kumāra."

Sarga 37

[1–6] When Kauśika had finished telling Rāma Kākutstha this sweet-syllabled tale, he addressed him further: "Long ago there was a heroic and righteous king named Sagara, the ruler of Ayodhyā. He was childless, although he desired children. Rāma, the elder wife of Sagara, whose name was Keśinī, was the righteous and truthful daughter of the king of Vidarbha. And Sagara's second wife was Ariṣṭanemi's daughter, Sumati. In beauty she had no rival on earth. Once the king went to the Himalayas, and there he and his two wives performed austerities on Mount Bhṛguprasravaṇa. When a full one hundred years had passed, the sage Bhṛgu, foremost among the truthful, was pleased with Sagara's austerities and granted him a boon.

[7–12] " 'Blameless man,' he said, 'you will have a vast number of children. And what is more, bull among men, you will achieve fame unrivaled in this world. My son, one of your wives will give birth to a son who will carry on your dynasty. The other will bear sixty thousand sons.' The two wives of the king were greatly delighted, and cupping their hands in reverence, they propitiated that tiger among men as he was speaking to them, and they said: 'Which one of us will have the one son, brahman? And which one will give birth to many? Brahman, we want to know. May your words prove true.' Upon hearing these words, the extremely righteous Bhṛgu made this excellent reply, 'You may arrange it between yourselves. One son to carry on the dynasty or many sons mighty, vigorous, and renowned—which of you wants which boon?'

[13–19] "Now when Keśinī heard the sage's words, Rāma, delight of the Raghus, she chose, right there in the presence of the king, the son who would carry on the dynasty. But Sumati, Suparṇa's sister, chose the sixty thousand vigorous and renowned sons. Delight of the Raghus, the king then walked reverently around the seer. Then, bowing his head in homage, he returned to his own city with his wives. So, after some time had elapsed, Keśinī, the elder, gave birth to Sagara's son, who was called Asamañja. But as for Sumati, tiger among men, she gave birth to a gourdlike fetal mass. And when the gourd was split open, sixty thousand sons emerged. Nurses

nurtured them in pots filled with clarified butter, and after a long time, they grew to young manhood. Indeed, it was a very long time before Sagara's sixty thousand sons grew into their young manhood and beauty.

[20–26] "But, best of men, delight of the Raghus, the eldest son of Sagara took to forcibly seizing children and throwing them into the waters of the Sarayū, laughing as he watched them drown. Since he was bent on doing such mischief to the people, his father banished him from the city. Asamañja, however, had a mighty son named Aṃśumant, who spoke kindly to everyone and was well liked by all the people. After some time, best of men, Sagara had an idea and formed a resolution, saying, 'I will perform a sacrifice.' Then, when the king, who was learned in the *vedas*, had come to this decision to perform a sacrifice in consultation with his host of preceptors, he began the ritual."

Sarga 38

[1–7] When Viśvāmitra's tale was at an end, Rāma, delight of the Raghus, spoke in delight to the sage who shone like fire: "Bless you, brahman, I would like to hear this story too in great detail. How did my ancestor carry out his sacrifice?" Gently smiling, Viśvāmitra once more addressed Kākutstha: "Rāma, you shall now hear the whole story of great Sagara. Himavant, greatest of mountains and father-in-law of Śaṅkara, stands confronting the Vindhya range. The two, in fact, directly face each other. Best of men, tiger among men, the sacrifice took place between these two ranges, for it is said that this is the best region for sacrificial rites. Kākutstha, my son, Aṃśumant, equipped with a strong bow and a great chariot, following Sagara's instructions, guarded the sacrificial horse. But even though Sagara himself was the patron of the rite, Vāsava, taking on the form of a *rākṣasa*, carried off the sacrificial horse in an instant.

[8–16] "Now, as the great man's horse was being carried off, Kākutstha, all his hosts of preceptors spoke to him, the patron of the rite: 'At this very moment, your sacrificial horse is being taken away by force. You must kill the thief, Kākutstha, and bring back the horse. For this is a defect in the sacrifice that will bring disaster upon us all. Your majesty, you must see to it that this defect is made good.' When the king heard the words spoken by his preceptors in the assembly, he addressed these words to his sixty thousand sons: 'My sons, bulls among men, I do not see how *rākṣasas*

could have done this, for this great rite is being carried out by illustrious sages who are sanctified by vedic *mantras*. Therefore, my sons, you must go and seek the horse. May good fortune attend you. Follow its trail over all the ocean-garlanded earth. You must search carefully, my sons, league by league. In searching for the horse thief, at my command, you must dig up the very earth itself until you find the horse. Bless you. I am in a state of consecration. Therefore, I must wait here with my grandson and my preceptors until the horse is found.'

[17–22] "When they had been addressed in this manner, Rāma, the king's mighty sons were delighted and roamed the earth carrying out their father's orders. Tiger among men, with arms as hard as adamant, they each tore up the earth for a league on every side. Torn up by lances like bolts of lightning and with fearsome ploughshares, the earth cried out, delight of the Raghus. Rāghava, there was an unbearable outcry of creatures being killed—of *nāgas*, *asuras*, and *rākṣasas*. Delight of the Raghus, those heroes tore up the earth to a distance of sixty thousand leagues, all the way down to the splendid underworld, Rasātala. In this fashion, tiger among men, the king's sons roamed everywhere, digging up this mountain-studded continent of Jambūdvīpa.

[23–26] "Then all the gods, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, and serpents, their minds reeling, approached Grandfather Brahmā. Utterly terrified, their faces downcast, they propitiated the great Grandfather, addressing these words to him: 'O lord, the sons of Sagara are digging up the entire earth. Many great beings, as well as creatures of the waters, are being killed. Crying, "He has carried off the horse! He has ruined our sacrifice!" the sons of Sagara are slaughtering all creatures.' "

Sarga 39

[1–8] "When the holy lord, Grandfather Brahmā, had heard the words of the gods, who were terrified and bewildered by the might of those destructive men, he replied to them, saying: 'Wise Vāsudeva, to whom this whole earth belongs, has assumed the form of Kapila and ever upholds the earth. This tearing up of the earth was foreseen as necessary. So also was the destruction of Sagara's short-lived sons.' Upon hearing the Grandfather's words, the thirty-three foe-conquering gods were greatly delighted and departed as they had come. Then, as Sagara's great sons continued tearing

up the earth, there arose a noise like that of an earthquake. When they had split open the entire earth and walked reverently around the whole of it, all the sons of Sagara together addressed these words to their father: ‘We have gone over the entire earth and have slain many powerful beings: gods, *dānavas*, *rākṣasas*, *piśācas*, serpents, and *kinnaras*. Yet we have found neither the horse nor the horse thief. What shall we do? Bless you, think of a plan.’

[9–14] “When he heard these words from his sons, delight of the Raghus, that foremost of kings, Sagara, replied to them in anger: ‘You must dig further, bless you. Tear open the earth! Come back when you have accomplished your mission and found the horse thief.’ Acting upon their father’s words, the sixty thousand sons of great Sagara rushed back to Rasātala. Digging down from there, they saw Virūpākṣa, one of the mountainous elephants who support the earth, bearing his burden. Delight of the Raghus, that great elephant Virūpākṣa supports the entire earth, with its mountains and forests, on his head. So whenever that great elephant shakes his head for a moment to relieve his weariness, there is an earthquake.

[15–22] “When they had walked reverently around the great elephant, the guardian of the east, and done him honor, they went on tearing up Rasātala. After tearing up the east, they went on and tore up the south. In the south, they saw another great elephant, mighty Mahāpadma, who, like a huge mountain, supports the earth on his head. It filled them with the greatest wonder. But when the sixty thousand sons of Sagara had walked reverently around him, they tore up the west. In the west too, those mighty men saw a great and mountainous elephant, Saumanasa, one of the elephants who support the earth. They walked around him reverently and inquired about his well-being, then went on digging up the north. In the north, best of the Raghus, they saw snow-white Bhadra, who supports the earth with his splendid body. Those sixty thousand sons touched him, and after walking around him reverently, tore up the earth once more.

[23–28] “Finally, all the sons of Sagara went to the famous northeastern quarter and dug up the earth in their fury. And it was there that they saw the eternal Vāsudeva in the form of Kapila and, grazing near the god, the horse. Thinking him to be the one who had ruined their sacrifice, they were enraged, and they ran toward him, eyes clouded with anger, crying: ‘Stay

where you are! Stay where you are! You are the one who stole our sacrificial horse. Fool! Know that we, the sons of Sagara, have come!' When Kapila heard these words, delight of the Raghus, he was filled with great fury and uttered the syllable '*Hum*.' That very instant, Kākutstha, all the sons of Sagara were reduced to a heap of ashes by the great and unfathomable Kapila."

Sarga 40

[1–6] "When, delight of the Raghus, King Sagara realized that his sons had been gone for a very long time, he spoke to his grandson, who shone with an inner splendor. 'You are a hero accomplished in the arts of war and equal in blazing energy to your forefathers. Go then and seek out the path of your forefathers, the path by which the horse was taken. The creatures that live underground are huge and powerful, so you must take your bow and a sword to ward them off. You must pay homage to those who deserve homage and kill those who would obstruct you. Then, when you have accomplished your mission, you must come back and complete my sacrifice.' When Aṃśumant had been thus fittingly addressed by the great Sagara, he took his bow and sword and departed, striding swiftly. At the behest of the king, O best of men, he set out on the subterranean path that had been excavated by his great forefathers.

[7–11] "There that mighty man saw one of the elephants who support the earth. It was being worshiped by *daityas*, *dānavas*, *rākṣasas*, *piśācas*, and the great birds and serpents. After he had walked around it reverently, he inquired as to its well-being, asking also about his forefathers and the horse thief. When the elephant heard Aṃśumant's words, it replied affectionately, 'Son of Asamañja, you shall quickly accomplish your mission and return with the horse.' Hearing these words, he set out to question all the elephants who support the earth, in the proper manner and in due sequence. All those guardians of the directions, who understood the subtleties of speech and were themselves eloquent, honored and encouraged him, saying, 'You shall return with the horse.'

[12–15] "When he heard these words, he strode swiftly to where his forefathers, the sons of Sagara, had been turned to heaps of ash. Then the son of Asamañja was overcome with grief. Deeply anguished over their death, he cried out in his great sorrow. Overwhelmed with grief and sorrow,

that tiger among men spied the sacrificial horse grazing nearby. That mighty man wished to perform the funerary libations for the king's sons, but although he searched for water, he could find no body of water.

[16–22] "But then, Rāma, casting about his sharp eye, he spied his forefathers' uncle, the king of birds, Suparṇa, rival of the wind. And the bird, the mighty Vainateya, said these words to him: 'Do not grieve, tiger among men. This slaughter took place for the good of the world. And since, wise man, these mighty men were consumed by none other than unfathomable Kapila, you should not offer them the water of this world. Bull among men, the Ganges is the eldest daughter of Himalaya. It is she alone, the purifier of the world, who can purify these men, now turned to heaps of ash. When their ashes are moistened by the Ganges, beloved of all the world, only then, my son, will the sixty thousand princes be carried to heaven. Illustrious bull among men, take the horse and go. For, hero, you must complete your grandfather's sacrifice.' Heeding Suparṇa's words, the renowned and mighty Aṃśumant took the horse and returned home swiftly.

[23–26] "Then, delight of the Raghus, he approached the king, who was still in a state of consecration. He told him all that had happened, just as it had taken place, and repeated Suparṇa's words. After hearing the dreadful words of Aṃśumant, the king completed his sacrifice in due order, according to precept. But when the majestic lord of the earth, the king, had completed the sacrifice and returned to his capital, he could think of no plan to bring down the Ganges. Finally, after a very long time, the great king, who had reigned for thirty thousand years, went to heaven still without having thought of a plan."

Sarga 41

[1–7] "When Sagara had succumbed to the law of time, Rāma, his ministers made righteous Aṃśumant their king. Aṃśumant was a very great king, delight of the Raghus, and he had a great son famed as Dilīpa. Turning the kingdom over to Dilīpa, delight of the Raghus, he performed very severe austerities on a lovely peak in the Himalayas. After living in an ascetics' grove for thirty-two thousand years, the renowned ascetic King Aṃśumant at last attained heaven. Mighty Dilīpa too, upon learning about the slaughter of his grandfathers, found his thoughts so scattered by grief that he too was unable to arrive at a solution. He brooded about it constantly, wondering:

‘How can I bring down the Ganges? How can I perform their funerary libations? How can I save them?’ Thus did the king, celebrated for his righteousness, constantly brood, and, in time, a most righteous son named Bhagīratha was born to him.

[8–15] “Mighty King Dilīpa performed many sacrifices and reigned for thirty thousand years. Yet, even so, tiger among men, he could think of no way to save his ancestors. At last he took ill and succumbed to the law of time. After first consecrating his son Bhagīratha as king, that bull among men, the king, went to Indra’s world by virtue of the merit he had acquired for himself through his deeds. Now, the righteous and mighty royal seer Bhagīratha had no children, delight of the Raghus. And so, since he lacked an heir, he wished to have one. For this reason, delight of the Raghus, he undertook protracted austerities at Gokarṇa. Keeping his arms continually raised, eating but once a month, and controlling his senses, he practiced the austerity of the five fires. After he had practiced such awesome asceticism for a thousand years, Lord Brahmā, supreme lord and master of all creatures, was greatly pleased. Accompanied by the hosts of gods, Grandfather Brahmā approached great Bhagīratha, still immersed in his austerities, and said: ‘Illustrious Bhagīratha, lord of the people, I am pleased with these austerities you have performed so well. You have been true to your vows and so may choose a boon.’

[16–19] “The illustrious and mighty Bhagīratha stood, cupping his hands in reverence, and spoke to Brahmā, grandfather of all the worlds: ‘If you are pleased with me, Lord, and if I am to have some reward for my austerities, then let me be the one to offer the funerary libations to all the sons of Sagara. Let the ashes of those great men, my great-grandfathers, be moistened by the waters of the Ganges, so that they may, at last, attain heaven. O God, grant me also children so that our line shall never fail. O God, let this be my second boon on behalf of the House of Ikṣvāku.’

[20–24] “When the king had delivered this speech, the grandfather of all the worlds replied to him in fine words, both sweet and sweetly spoken: ‘Bhagīratha, great chariot warrior, this noble wish of yours shall come true. Bless you, you shall extend the Ikṣvāku dynasty. Haimavatī, the Ganges, is the eldest daughter of the Himalaya. Your majesty, Hara shall be charged with checking her fall. For, your majesty, the earth would not be able to withstand the force of the Ganges’s fall. Hero, I know of no one other than

Śiva, the trident bearer, who could check her fall.’ When the god, creator of the world, had addressed the king in this fashion, he spoke to the Ganges, and then went to heaven with all the hosts of the Maruts.”

Sarga 42

[1–6] “After the god of gods had gone, Rāma, Bhagīratha stood for a year on the tip of one big toe, worshiping Śiva. At the end of that year, Śiva Paśupati, lord of beasts, and husband of Umā, who is worshiped by all the worlds, said this to the king: ‘Best of men, I am pleased with you and will do what you desire. I shall bear the daughter of the mountain king on my head.’ And so, Rāma, Ganges, the elder Haimavatī, who is worshiped by all the worlds, then took on an extremely powerful form and plunged from the sky with irresistible force onto Śiva’s gracious head. But bewildered by the coils of his matted hair, she could not find her way out; and so the goddess wandered about in there for a great many years. Hara was immensely pleased by this, delight of the Raghus, and so he released the Ganges into Lake Bindu.

[7–10] “And that is how she came down from the sky onto Śaṅkara’s head, and from there to the earth, her waters rushing down with a deafening roar. And as she fell to earth from the sky, the gods, seers, *gandharvas*, *yakṣas*, and hosts of perfected beings looked on. Even the gods, gathered there in their flying palaces, huge as cities, with their horses and splendid elephants, were awed. Thus did the hosts of immeasurably powerful gods assemble in their desire to see that greatest of marvels, the mighty descent of the Ganges.

[11–16] “The cloudless sky was shining with the hosts of hastening gods and the splendor of their ornaments, so that it seemed illumined by a hundred suns. Filled with masses of twisting snakes, dolphins, and fish, the sky seemed shot with scattered lightning. Now white with a thousand shreds of flying foam and flocks of *haṃsas*, the sky seemed suddenly filled with autumnal clouds. At some points the river flowed swiftly, at others slowly. In some places it moved tortuously or broadened out; at others, it narrowed and sank between its banks only to rise again elsewhere. Here and there the water dashed back upon itself, momentarily hurled up into the air, only to fall to earth once more. The water fell first upon Śaṅkara’s head,

and only then to earth. Therefore, it shone, for it was pure and able to wash away all sin.

[17–20] “Then thinking, ‘Water fallen from Bhava’s body is holy,’ the *gandharvas* and the hosts of seers bathed there with those who dwelt on earth. Even those who had fallen to earth from heaven through some curse were freed from all sin by bathing there. Cleansed of their sins by that shining water, they flew up into the sky again and were restored to their proper worlds. People were delighted by that shining water and joyfully bathed in the Ganges, freeing themselves from all weariness.

[21–24] “Then, as the royal seer mighty Bhagīratha, mounted in a celestial chariot, drove on before, the Ganges followed along behind him. Joyously following the Ganges, Rāma, all the gods, the hosts of seers, the *daityas*, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas*, the foremost of the *gandharvas* and *yakṣas*, the *kinnaras*, great serpents, and all the *apsarases* with all the creatures of the waters made a procession behind Bhagīratha’s chariot. And thus did this most illustrious of rivers, the Ganges, who washes away all sins, follow in King Bhagīratha’s train.”

Sarga 43

[1–6] “Followed by the Ganges, the king proceeded to the ocean and entered that gaping hole in the earth where his ancestors had been turned to ashes. And when those ashes were flooded with water, Rāma, Brahmā, the lord of all the worlds, spoke to the king: ‘Tiger among men, the sixty thousand sons of great Sagara have been saved and like gods, have gone to heaven. Your majesty, the sons of Sagara will remain in heaven like gods as long as the waters of the ocean remain in the world. And the Ganges will be your eldest daughter. She too will remain in the world and will be known by a name that you shall give her. For the Ganges, the river of the three paths, will be known as the celestial Bhāgīrathī. And because she sanctifies three courses, she will be known as the Tripathagā, “She Who Goes by Three Paths.”

[7–11] “ ‘Lord of men, you must perform here the funerary libation for all your forefathers. Fulfill your vow, your majesty. Your majesty, your glorious ancestor Sagara, a champion of righteousness, could not fulfill this cherished hope. Nor, my son, was this vow fulfilled by Aṃśumant, though his power was unrivaled in this world and he strove to bring the Ganges

down. Then there was your father, the mighty royal seer Dilīpa, whose power was equal to that of a great seer and whose austerity was equal to mine. But even that blameless and illustrious man, so steadfast in the code of the kshatriyas, could not, though he too strove to do so, think of a way to bring down the Ganges.

[12–15] " 'But you have fulfilled this vow, bull among men. You have won the highest and most coveted glory in the world. And, foe-conquering hero, by bringing down the Ganges, you have earned the great abode of righteousness. Bathe yourself in these waters, best of men, for bathing here is always purifying. Purify yourself, tiger among men, and now achieve the holy purpose of your quest. Make the funerary libations for all your forefathers. Farewell, I shall go to my own world. You may depart, your majesty.'

[16–20] "Having spoken in this fashion, the lord of gods, the glorious grandfather of all worlds, departed for the world of the gods just as he had come. Then the glorious king the royal seer, Bhagīratha, offered magnificent funerary libations to the sons of Sagara in due order and according to the ritual injunctions. At last, after bathing and purifying himself once more, he returned to his own city. Having thus accomplished his purpose, best of men, he once more ruled his kingdom. His people too rejoiced, Rāghava. For in regaining their king, they too had accomplished their goal and were freed from all sorrow and anxiety. And now I have told you the entire history of the Ganges, Rāma. Bless you and may fortune smile upon you. But see, the time for our evening devotions is slipping away. The tale I have just told you, 'The Descent of the Ganges,' brings one wealth, fame, long life, heaven, and even sons."

Sarga 44

[1–6] When Rāghava, seated there with Lakṣmaṇa, heard Viśvāmitra's words, he was amazed and said to him: "Brahman, this excellent tale you have told, the tale of the holy descent of the Ganges and the filling of the ocean, is truly wonderful." And as he sat with Saumitri in contemplation of Viśvāmitra's marvelous tale, the whole night slipped away. Then, in the clear light of dawn, foe-conquering Rāghava said these words to the great sage Viśvāmitra, who had already performed his daily devotions: "The holy goddess Night has gone and we have heard something well worth hearing.

Mighty ascetic, in my careful contemplation of your story, the whole night passed for me as though it were but a moment. Now let us cross this best of streams, the holy river of the three paths. Here is a boat with comfortable seats that belongs to the seers of holy deeds. Realizing that so holy a man as you had come, they must have sent it in haste."

[7–13] When Viśvāmitra heard great Rāghava's words, he made the crossing with a group of seers and the two Rāghavas. Reaching the northern bank, they paid homage to the host of seers, and, once they landed on the Ganges's bank, they beheld the city of Viśālā. From there the great sage and the two Rāghavas proceeded at once toward that lovely and celestial city, comparable only to heaven. Wise Rāma cupped his hands in reverence and questioned the great sage Viśvāmitra about the excellent city of Viśālā: "Great sage, what royal family dwells in Viśālā? Bless you, I wish to hear about it, for my curiosity is very great." When he heard Rāma's words, the bull among sages began to relate the ancient history of Viśālā. "Rāma, now listen to the marvelous story of Śakra as I tell it. Rāghava, you shall hear what happened in this region just as it took place.

[14–17] "Long ago, Rāma, in the Kṛta Yuga, the sons of Diti were very powerful. But the sons of Aditi were also mighty; and, in addition, they were illustrious and extremely righteous. Once, best of men, a thought occurred to all of those great beings: 'How may we become immortal—free from old age and sickness?' As those wise beings were pondering this, an idea occurred to them: 'If we should churn the ocean of milk, we might obtain from it the elixir of immortality.' Their might knew no bounds. So, once they had resolved to undertake such a churning, they took the great serpent Vāsuki for their rope and Mount Mandara as their churn and began to churn.

[18–23] "The first things to appear were the physician Dhanvantari and the resplendent *apsarases*. Since, best of the sons of Manu, these last, the most resplendent of women, were born of that churning in the waters (*apsu*) from the elixir (*rasa*), they came to be known as *apsarases*, 'water maidens.' Six hundred million was the number of these resplendent *apsarases*, Kākutstha, and their maidservants were innumerable. But neither the gods nor the *dānavas* would accept them. So, because they were not accepted, they are said to belong to everyone. After this, delight of the Raghus, Varuṇa's illustrious daughter, Vāruṇī, was born. She too wished to

be accepted. Heroic Rāma, the sons of Diti would not accept Surā, 'Wine,' the daughter of Varuṇa, but the sons of Aditi did accept her, for she was irreproachable. Because of this, the *daiteyas* came to be known as the *asuras*, 'those who have no wine,' while the sons of Aditi became the *suras*, 'those who have wine.' Having accepted Vāruṇī, the gods were joyful and excited.

[24–27] "Next, best of men, came Uccaiḥśravas, foremost of horses, and Kaustubha, most precious of gems, followed by the finest thing of all, the nectar. For the sake of this nectar, the sons of Aditi slaughtered the sons of Diti, so that her family suffered an enormous loss. Indeed, Aditi's heroic sons slew almost all the sons of Diti in that great and terrible war of the *daiteyas* and the *ādityas*. When Indra, smasher of citadels, had slain the sons of Diti and seized sovereignty, he was delighted and ruled the worlds together with their hosts of seers and celestial bards."

Sarga 45

[1–7] "Now, when Diti's sons were killed, Rāma, she was overwhelmed with grief and spoke to her husband, Mārīca Kāśyapa: 'Holy one, your mighty sons have slain my sons. Now I desire to obtain—through long austerity—a son who shall slay Śakra. I will undertake austerities; but you must give me a child and promise that he will be a son capable of killing Śakra.' Hearing her words, mighty Mārīca Kāśyapa replied to the grief-stricken Diti: 'Bless you, ascetic woman. Make yourself pure. For you shall give birth to a son who can slay Śakra in battle. If you remain pure, then, when a full one thousand years have elapsed, you shall, through me, give birth to a son capable of destroying the three worlds.' Speaking in this fashion, the mighty man stroked her with his hand. Then, having touched her in this way, he said, 'Farewell,' and went off to practice austerities.

[8–11] "When he had gone, best of men, Diti, now utterly delighted, went to Kuśaplavana where she performed the most awesome austerities. But, best of men, while she was practicing these austerities, thousand-eyed Indra served her most virtuously. Thus, thousand-eyed Indra brought her fire, *kuśa* grass, firewood, water, fruit, roots, and whatever else she desired. In this way, Śakra served Diti unceasingly, massaging her limbs to lessen her weariness.

[12–16] “And so it was, delight of the Raghus, that when but ten years remained of the thousand, Diti, completely won over by thousand-eyed Indra, said to him: ‘Bless you, foremost among the mighty, there are but ten short years remaining of the term of my austerity. Then you shall see your brother. He will desire to conquer you, but for your sake I shall appease him. Be free now of anxiety, my son, for you shall share the conquest of the three worlds with him.’ The sun was at its zenith, and even as the goddess Diti was saying this to Śakra, she was suddenly overcome by sleep while her feet were where her head should have been. Śakra saw that she was in a state of impurity, for she had placed the hair of her head where her feet ought to have been and had put her feet in the place for her head. He was delighted and laughed aloud.

[17–22] “Then Indra, smasher of citadels, entered the opening in her body and, with complete self-possession, smashed her fetus into seven pieces. Smashed by his hundred-pointed *vajra*, the fetus cried so loudly, Rāma, that Diti awoke. ‘*Mā rudaḥ! Mā rudaḥ*!’ ‘Do not cry! Do not cry!’ said Śakra to the fetus. Then, though it went on crying, mighty Vāsava smashed it. ‘Do not kill him! Do not kill him!’ cried Diti, and, in deference to a mother’s words, Śakra came forth. Still holding the *vajra* and cupping his hands in reverence, Śakra addressed Diti: ‘Goddess, you were sleeping with the hair of your head where your feet should have been and were thus impure. I seized upon that opportunity to smash him who was to have been born the slayer of Śakra in battle, so that he now lies in seven pieces. Goddess, please forgive me for what I have done.’ ”

Sarga 46

[1–5] “When Diti’s fetus had been split into seven pieces, she was overwhelmed with great sorrow and spoke humbly to the invincible thousand-eyed Indra: ‘It is my own fault that my fetus has been split into seven pieces and rendered useless. Lord of the gods, slayer of Bala, you are not to blame for this. But I should like to see some good come of the destruction of my fetus. Let the seven fragments become the guardians of the regions of the seven winds. Let the seven sons I have borne be known as the Mārutas, and let them wander freely, in celestial forms, through the regions of the winds in heaven. Let one move through Brahmaloka and

another through the world of Indra, while a third, the illustrious Vāyu, shall move freely through the sky.

[6–9] " 'Bless you, best of gods, let my remaining four sons be gods and at your command range freely in all directions. Let them be known as the Mārutas, "Those Who Do Not Cry," the very name you gave them.' Hearing her words, thousand-eyed Indra, the smasher of citadels and slayer of Bala, cupped his hands in reverence and addressed Diti: 'Bless you, everything will be just as you say; you need have no doubt. Your sons shall become gods and range freely.' And so they reached an agreement there in the ascetics' forest, Rāma, and, as both mother and son had accomplished their purposes, they departed for heaven, or so we have heard.

[10–19] "Kākutstha, this is the very region where the great lord Indra dwelt while serving Diti, who had become perfect through austerity. Tiger among men, an extremely righteous son known as Viśāla was once born to Ikṣvāku and Alambuṣā. It was he who founded the city of Viśālā, here on this site. The mighty Hemacandra was Viśāla's son, Rāma. Hemacandra's immediate successor was called Sucandra. Sucandra's son was known as Dhumrāśva, Rāma, and this Dhumrāśva fathered a son named Sṛñjaya. Sṛñjaya's son was the majestic and valiant Sahadeva. Sahadeva had a most righteous son named Kuśāśva. Kuśāśva's son was the valiant and powerful Somadatta. Somadatta's son was known as Kākutstha. It is the latter's mighty son, the godlike and invincible Sumati, who now lives in this city. Through the grace of Ikṣvāku, all the great kings of Viśālā are long-lived, mighty, and righteous. We shall spend the night here in comfort, Rāma. Tomorrow morning, best of men, we must see Janaka."

[20–22] Now when the mighty and illustrious Sumati, foremost among outstanding men, heard that Viśvāmitra had arrived, he went forth to welcome him. Accompanied by his kinsmen and counselors, he accorded him the greatest reverence. Cupping his hands in reverence, he inquired after Viśvāmitra's well-being and said to him: "I am fortunate, sage, indeed, I am highly favored, in that you have come not only into my kingdom but into my very presence. Surely there is no one more fortunate than I."

Sarga 47

[1–6] The two men greeted each other, each inquiring as to the well-being of the other. Then, formalities at an end, Sumati said these words to the

great sage: “Bless you, these two heroic princes look as valorous as the gods. They look like tigers or bulls and move like lions or elephants. Armed with swords, quivers, and bows, their eyes as long as lotus petals, in the full bloom of their young manhood, they rival the Aśvins in beauty. They seem like immortals by some chance come to earth from the world of the gods. How is it, sage, that they come here on foot? What is the purpose of their visit? Whose sons are they? Identical in form, gesture, and movement, they adorn this land as the sun and moon adorn the sky. Why have these fine men, these heroes, come by this difficult road, bearing such splendid weapons? I wish to hear the truth of this.”

[7–12] When Viśvāmitra had heard this speech, he told him, just as it had happened, of their stay at the Ashram of the Perfected Being and the killing of the *rākṣasas*. Upon hearing Viśvāmitra’s words, the king was overjoyed and paid due homage to the two mighty sons of Daśaratha; for they were important guests and deserving of great honor. Treated with such respect by Sumati, the two Rāghavas stayed there for one night and then went on to Mithilā. When the sages saw Mithilā, Janaka’s glorious city, they praised it, crying, “Wonderful! Wonderful!” But Rāghava, noticing an ancient ashram, lovely and deserted, in a wood near Mithilā, questioned that bull among sages: “This splendid spot appears to be an ashram. Why then is it empty of sages? Holy man, I wish to hear about it. To whom did this ashram once belong?”

[13–16] When he heard the words that Rāghava had spoken, the great sage Viśvāmitra, so skilled in speech, replied: “Ah! Listen, Rāghava, and I will tell you exactly whose ashram this was and how it came to be cursed by that great man in anger. Best of men, this heavenly ashram, which even the gods worship, once belonged to the great Gautama. And it was here, renowned prince, that he engaged in austerities with Ahalyā for many, many years.

[17–21] “Now, one time, Śacī’s lord, thousand-eyed Indra, learning of the sage’s absence, took on his appearance and said these words to Ahalyā: ‘Shapely woman, men filled with desire do not wait for a woman’s fertile period. Fair-waisted woman, I want to make love to you.’ Now the foolish woman knew that it was thousand-eyed Indra in the guise of the sage, delight of the Raghus, but she consented in her lust for the king of the gods. And when she had accomplished her heart’s desire, she said to the best of

gods: 'You have fulfilled your desire, best of gods. Now you must go quickly. You must always protect yourself and me, lord of the gods, my lover.' Smiling, Indra said these words to Ahalyā: 'Fair-hipped woman, I am fully satisfied and shall depart as I came.'

[22–27] "Having made love to her in this manner, Rāma, he came out of her leaf hut uneasy about Gautama and hastening in his fear. But there he met the great sage Gautama coming in, unassailable by the gods and *dānavas* and filled with the power of his austerities. That bull among sages was still damp with the water of the bathing place, yet carrying kindling and *kuśa* grass, he shone like fire. Seeing him, the lord of gods became frightened, and his face fell. Now, when the good sage saw the wicked thousand-eyed Indra in his own guise, he spoke in anger: 'You fool! For taking on my form and doing a thing that is not to be done, you shall lose your testicles.' No sooner had the great and furious sage Gautama spoken in this fashion than thousand-eyed Indra's testicles fell to the ground.

[28–32] "Having cursed Śakra, he then cursed his wife as well, saying: 'You shall live here for many thousands of years. You shall dwell in this ashram with nothing to eat, your only food air, suffering, lying on ashes, and invisible to all creatures. You will be purified only when Rāma, the invincible son of Daśaratha, comes to this dreadful forest. Only through extending hospitality to him, you wicked woman, will you take on your proper body in my presence, free from lust and folly and filled with joy.' When the mighty Gautama had spoken to his ill-behaved wife in this fashion, he abandoned his ashram. And now the great ascetic performs his austerities in the Himalayas on a lovely peak, frequented by perfected beings and celestial bards."

Sarga 48

[1–4] "Now that Śakra was emasculated, he spoke, his terror showing in his face, to the gods who were led by Agni, god of fire, and accompanied by the celestial bards and hosts of seers: 'In arousing the anger of great Gautama and thereby creating an obstacle to his austerities, I have accomplished the work of the gods. For in his wrath he has emasculated me and repudiated his wife. Thus, in provoking this great outpouring of curses, I have robbed him of his ascetic's power. Therefore, all of you—great gods,

celestial bards, and hosts of seers—should restore my testicles to me, for I have aided the gods.'

[5–10] "When the gods led by Agni heard these words of Indra, god of a hundred sacrifices, they went with all the hosts of the Maruts to see the divine ancestors and said: 'Śakra has been emasculated. But here is a ram whose testicles are intact. Take the ram's testicles and give them to Śakra at once. The castrated ram will give you the greatest satisfaction, as will those men who offer one for your pleasure.' When the divine ancestors assembled there had heard Agni's words, they tore out the ram's testicles and gave them to thousand-eyed Indra. And from that time onward, Kākutstha, the assembly of the divine ancestors eats castrated rams, reserving their testicles for Indra. And that is why, from that time onward, Rāghava, through the power of the great Gautama's asceticism, Indra has had a ram's testicles.

[11–16] "Come then, mighty man, to the ashram of that holy sage and save illustrious Ahalyā, who is as lovely as a goddess." Upon hearing Viśvāmitra's words, Rāghava followed the sage and entered the ashram with Lakṣmaṇa. There he saw that illustrious woman, blazing with an inner splendor through her austerities, yet hidden from the eyes of all who came near, even gods and *asuras*. She was like a goddess, and it seemed as if the Creator himself had wrought her, with great effort, out of pure creative energy. She was like a brilliant flame whose form is obscured by smoke. She was like the light of the full moon, but clouded, or obscured by mist or like the blazing splendor of the sun discerned but dimly through dense clouds. For through the words of Gautama, she had become invisible to the three worlds until such time as she should see Rāma.

[17–22] The two Rāghavas then grasped her feet, and she welcomed them, recalling Gautama's words. Attentively, she provided hospitality, giving them the guest-offering and water for their feet, according to the rites enjoined by tradition, and Kākutstha accepted them. Suddenly there was a great shower of blossoms accompanied by the sound of the gods' drums. And there was a great gathering of *gandharvas* and *apsarases*. "Wonderful! Wonderful!" cried the gods, and they paid homage to Ahalyā, now once more submissive to Gautama's control, her body purified through the power of her austerities. Mighty Gautama was overjoyed to be reunited at last with Ahalyā, and the great ascetic did homage to Rāma in the prescribed fashion.

Then, having done so, he resumed his austerities. And as for Rāma, he received this great homage from the great sage Gautama in the prescribed fashion and then proceeded on to Mithilā.

Sarga 49

[1–5] Following Viśvāmitra, Rāma and Saumitri proceeded toward the northeast until they came to a sacrificial ground. Then Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa spoke to the tiger among sages: "Wonderful indeed is the magnificence of great Janaka's sacrifice. Illustrious sage, there are many thousands of brahmans here, residents of many countries, all learned in the *vedas*. The dwellings of these seers all appear to be crowded with hundreds of carts. Brahman, please arrange for a place for us to stay." Upon hearing Rāma's speech, the great seer Viśvāmitra made camp in a secluded spot with water near at hand.

[6–11] Learning that Viśvāmitra had arrived, the king, following his irreproachable *purohita*, Śatānanda, and his great sacrificial priests, at once brought the guest-offering and righteously offered it to the best of sages to the accompaniment of vedic *mantras*. Accepting the homage of the great Janaka, he inquired after the king's health and the smooth progress of the sacrifice. He also inquired after the sages, preceptors, and the *purohita*, embracing them all joyously, as is the custom. Then the king, his hands cupped in reverence, addressed the best of sages, "Please be seated with these excellent sages, holy man." Hearing Janaka's words, the great sage sat down, followed by the *purohita*, sacrificial priests, the king, and his counselors.

[12–16] Then the king, seeing them seated all around in proper fashion, spoke to Viśvāmitra: "Today the gods have made fruitful the lavishness of my sacrifice. But in seeing this holy man, I have already gained the fruit of the sacrifice. Brahman, bull among sages, how fortunate I am, how grateful that you have come with these sages to my sacrificial ground. My wise men tell me that twelve days remain of this session, brahman-seer. Then, if you please, Kauśika, you may witness the gods seeking their portions." When he had spoken to the tiger among sages in this fashion, the protector of men, with complete self-possession, questioned him further, his face showing his delight, and his hands cupped in reverence:

[17–25] “Bless you, these two heroic princes look as valorous as the gods. They look like tigers or bulls and move like lions or elephants. Armed with swords, quivers, and bows, their eyes as long as lotus petals, in the full bloom of their young manhood, they rival the Aśvins in beauty. They seem like immortals by some chance come to earth from the world of the gods. How is it, sage, that they come here on foot? What is the purpose of their visit? To whom do they belong? Whose sons are they, great sage, that they bear such splendid weapons? Identical in form, gesture, and movement, they adorn this land as the sun and moon adorn the sky. I want to know the truth about these two heroes who still wear sidelocks.” When he had heard great Janaka’s words, he told him about the two great sons of Daśaratha. He told them of their stay at the Ashram of the Perfected Being and the killing of the *rākṣasas*, about their daring journey and their visit to Viśālā, of their meeting with Ahalyā and Gautama, and of how they had come to test the great bow. When he had related all that to great Janaka, the great and mighty sage Viśvāmitra lapsed into silence.

Sarga 50

[1–3] Upon seeing Rāma and hearing these words of wise Viśvāmitra, the great and powerful ascetic Śatānanda, Gautama’s eldest son, who shone brightly through the power of his austerities, was moved to the greatest wonder, and the hairs of his body bristled with delight. Seeing to it that the king’s sons were comfortably seated, Śatānanda spoke to Viśvāmitra, best of sages:

[4–9] “Tiger among sages, did you present my renowned mother, who has suffered such prolonged penances, to the king’s son? Mighty man, did my renowned mother do homage with offerings of forest fruits to Rāma, who is worthy of the homage of all living beings? Mighty man, have you told Rāma of what happened to my mother long ago, when the god used her so wickedly? Bless you, Kauśika, best of sages, was my mother reunited with my father after seeing Rāma? Son of Kuśika, was great and mighty Rāma shown reverence by my father, and did he show him reverence in return before coming here? Son of Kuśika, did this self-possessed Rāma respectfully salute my father with a tranquil heart before coming here?”

[10–16] When the great sage Viśvāmitra, skilled in speech, heard eloquent Śatānanda’s words, he replied: “Best of sages, I did all that was

required within the limits of propriety. The sage and his wife were reunited like Bhārgava and Reṇukā." When mighty Śatānanda heard wise Viśvāmitra's words, he turned to Rāma and said: "Welcome, best of men. How fortunate that you have come, following this great seer, the invincible Viśvāmitra. Inconceivable in his actions and immeasurable in his splendor, the mighty Viśvāmitra became a brahman-seer through his own austerity. Did you know that he is the highest recourse? There is no one on earth more fortunate than you, Rāma, for your guardian is Kuśika's son, who has performed great austerities. Please listen, as I tell you about the great Kauśika. Listen as I recount the history of his mighty deeds, just as it happened.

[17–20] "The righteous man was long a foe-conquering king. He knew the ways of righteousness, had mastered all the sciences, and was devoted to the welfare of his subjects. Once there was a king named Kuśa, a son of Prajāpati, lord of creatures. Kuśa's son was the mighty and righteous Kuśanābha. Kuśanābha's son was known as Gādhi, and this great sage, mighty Viśvāmitra, is Gādhi's son. Mighty Viśvāmitra once ruled the earth, reigning as a king for many thousands of years.

[21–28] "But on one occasion that man of great blazing energy assembled his forces and, surrounded by a vast army, wandered over the earth. Roaming in turn through cities, countries, rivers, mountains, and ashrams, the king at length came to Vasiṣṭha's ashram, filled with all sorts of flowers, fruits, and trees. Greatest of conquerors, the mighty Viśvāmitra saw Vasiṣṭha's ashram, which was like a second Brahmaloka. It was filled with herds of all kinds of animals and frequented by perfected beings and celestial bards. It was made lovely by gods, *dānavas*, *gandharvas*, and *kinnaras*. It was filled with tame deer and was the home of flocks of birds. It was filled with hosts of brahman-seers and frequented by hosts of divine seers—great men who had perfected themselves through the practice of austerities and who shone like fire. It was splendid and continuously thronged with great men who resembled Brahmā and who lived on water alone, or air, or only withered leaves. It was filled with seers and *vālakhilyas*—self-controlled men who had conquered their anger and subdued their senses—men who lived only on fruit and roots and who were given over entirely to prayer and sacrifice."

Sarga 51

[1–5] “Mighty Viśvāmitra was delighted to see Vasiṣṭha, foremost in vedic recitation, and bowed to him in humility. Then great Vasiṣṭha spoke to him, saying, ‘You are welcome!’ Holy Vasiṣṭha then indicated that he should be seated. Once wise Viśvāmitra was seated, the eminent sage offered him fruit and roots as custom demanded. The eminent king, mighty Viśvāmitra, accepted Vasiṣṭha’s homage and then inquired after the progress of his austerities, his *agnihotra* rites, his disciples, and his grove of great trees. Vasiṣṭha replied that all was well.

[6–9] “Then Vasiṣṭha, son of Brahmā, great ascetic and foremost in vedic recitation, in turn questioned King Viśvāmitra, who sat there at his ease: ‘I trust that all is well with you, your majesty. Your majesty, you are a righteous man; I trust that you are governing your subjects in the manner proper to a king, and that, within the limits of righteousness, you keep them satisfied. Your dependents are, I trust, well taken care of and obedient to your commands. Foe-slaughtering hero, I trust that all your foes are conquered. Tiger among men, bane of your foes, I trust all is well with your army, treasury, and allies, and, sinless man, with your sons and grandsons as well.’

[10–17] “The mighty king Viśvāmitra humbly replied to the eminent Vasiṣṭha that everything was well. The two righteous men then engaged in pleasant conversation for a long time, with the greatest pleasure, so that they became quite fond of each other. At the end of their conversation, delight of the Raghus, Vasiṣṭha, smiling slightly, said these words to Viśvāmitra: ‘Mighty and unfathomable man, I wish to offer my hospitality, as befits your rank, to you and to your troops. Please accept this from me. Please, your majesty, accept the welcome that I am offering you. For you are the greatest of guests, your majesty, and I must make every effort to do you honor.’ When Vasiṣṭha had addressed him in this fashion, the wise King Viśvāmitra replied: ‘In merely speaking of honoring me, you have already done so. It is you who are deserving of honor, holy man, and yet you have honored me in every way with the things to be had in your ashram—with fruit and roots, with water for rinsing my feet and mouth, and by permitting me to see you. I shall go now, wise and holy man. Goodbye. Please look kindly upon me.’

[18–23] “But even though the king spoke in this fashion, Vasiṣṭha, who was both noble-minded and righteous, repeatedly pressed his invitation. At last, the son of Gādhi replied to Vasiṣṭha: ‘Very well. Let it be just as you wish, holy and eminent sage.’ On receiving this reply, Vasiṣṭha, foremost in vedic recitation and cleansed of all sin, was pleased and called to his brindled cow. ‘Come! Come quickly, Śabalā, and hear my words. I have decided to prepare a hospitable welcome, replete with sumptuous foods, for the royal seer and his troops. See to it for me. For my sake, heavenly wish-fulfilling cow, you must pour forth anything these men desire—as much as they want, using all the six flavors. Hurry, Śabalā, for you must make a huge amount of food, including savory rice and beverages, and delicacies to lick and suck.’ ”

Sarga 52

[1–6] “Addressed in this fashion by Vasiṣṭha, O foe-slaughtering hero, the wish-fulfilling cow Śabalā produced as much as anyone desired. She made sugar cane and sweets, parched grain and *maireya* wine, excellent liquors, costly beverages, and all sorts of food. She produced mountainous heaps of steaming rice, savory food, pulses, and rivers of curds. There were thousands of silver platters, filled with various delicious confections. In this way, Rāma, Vasiṣṭha was able to satisfy the hunger of Viśvāmitra’s entire army. Fed to satiation, the army was full of happy and well-fed people. The royal seer King Viśvāmitra, his womenfolk, brahmans, and *purohitas*, were likewise happy and well fed.

[7–9] “The honor shown him and his ministers and counselors filled him with great joy, and he addressed Vasiṣṭha: ‘Brahman, you who are yourself worthy of honor have cordially received me and shown me great honor. But listen, eloquent sage, for I have something to say: Please give me Śabalā in exchange for a hundred thousand cows, for, holy man, she is truly a jewel, and all jewels belong to the king. Therefore, twice-born brahman, you must give me Śabalā. For, by rights, she is mine.’

[10–15] “Addressed in this fashion by Viśvāmitra, the eminent, righteous, and holy sage Vasiṣṭha replied to that lord of the earth: ‘I would not give you Śabalā, your majesty, for a hundred thousand or even a thousand million cows—not even for masses of silver. For she is as inseparable from me as is good repute from a man of self-control. Foe-

conquering hero, Śabalā is not deserving of abandonment. For upon her depend my offerings to the gods and the offerings to my departed ancestors, as well as our bodily sustenance—so do the *agnihotra* rites, the *bali*, and the *homa* offerings. So too do the ritual utterances *svāhā* and *vaṣaṭ*, and the various branches of learning—all this depends upon her, royal seer. Of this there can be no doubt. Truly, she is everything to me, always gratifying me. Your majesty, there are many reasons why I cannot give you Śabalā.'

[16–24] "However, being spoken to in this fashion by Vasiṣṭha only made the eloquent Viśvāmitra still more determined, and he said these words: 'I will give you fourteen thousand elephants with golden chains for girth and neck, equipped with goads of gold. And I will give you eight hundred golden four-yoked chariots, adorned with bells and drawn by white horses. Sage firm in your vows, I will give you, in addition, one thousand and ten powerful horses, foaled in good regions and born of noble stock. And to this I will add ten million young cows, each distinguished by a different coloring. Now give me Śabalā.' Addressed in this fashion by wise Viśvāmitra, the holy man replied: 'I would not give up Śabalā for anything, your majesty. For she alone is my jewel. She alone is my wealth. She alone is everything to me, my very life. Your majesty, she alone represents for me the new and full-moon rites, the sacrifices by which I earn my fees. She represents all the various ritual performances. There is no doubt, your majesty, that all my ritual performances depend upon her. But what is the use of all this idle chatter? I will not give up the wish-fulfilling cow.' "

Sarga 53

[1–5] "Now, when the sage Vasiṣṭha would not give up Śabalā, the wish-fulfilling cow, Rāma, Viśvāmitra had her dragged away from him by force. As the great king had Śabalā led away, Rāma, she was overwhelmed with grief and began to think: 'Has great Vasiṣṭha abandoned me, that the king's servants are taking me away, even though I am despondent and so terribly unhappy? What wrong have I done the great contemplative seer that this righteous man should abandon me, his favorite, when I am innocent and devoted to him?' Reflecting thus, she sighed repeatedly and then ran quickly to the incomparably powerful Vasiṣṭha.

[6–12] "Shaking off servants by the hundreds, foe-slaughtering hero, she ran with the speed of the wind to the great man's feet. Standing before

Vasiṣṭha, Śabalā bellowed like thundering storm clouds. Weeping and crying out, she spoke: ‘Holy son of Brahmā, since the king’s men are taking me away from you, have you abandoned me?’ Addressed in this fashion, the brahman-seer spoke these words, as though to an unhappy sister whose heart was consumed with grief: ‘I have not abandoned you, Śabalā, nor have you wronged me. This mighty king is taking you from me by force. My power is not equal to the king’s, especially today. For he is a mighty kshatriya monarch, the lord of the earth. There is his vast army with hosts of horses and chariots, bristling with elephants and banners. By virtue of this, he is stronger than I.’

[13–18] “Addressed in this fashion by Vasiṣṭha and skilled in speech, she humbly spoke these words in reply to the immeasurably splendid brahman-seer: ‘They say that a kshatriya has no real power, and that a brahman is, in fact, more powerful. Brahman, the power of a brahman is divine and much greater than that of the kshatriyas. Your power is immeasurable. Viśvāmitra is very powerful, but he is not mightier than you. Your power is unassailable. Just give the order, mighty man, and filled with the power of the brahmans, I will crush the might and pride of this wicked man.’ When she had addressed him in this fashion, Rāma, the greatly renowned Vasiṣṭha said: ‘Create an army to destroy the armies of my enemy.’ Then, protector of men, she gave a roar, ‘*Humbhā*,’ from which were born hundreds and hundreds of Pahlavas who destroyed Viśvāmitra’s army before his very eyes.

[19–23] “The king was furiously angry, and his eyes wide with rage, he destroyed those Pahlavas with all manner of weapons. Seeing the Pahlavas struck down in their hundreds by Viśvāmitra, the cow created a new, mixed force of dreadful Śakas and Yavanas. This mixed force of Śakas and Yavanas covered the earth. Splendid and immensely powerful, they shone like so many golden filaments of flowers. Carrying long swords and sharp-edged spears and clad in golden armor, they consumed the entire army of the king like so many blazing fires. Then mighty Viśvāmitra fired his weapons.”

Sarga 54

[1–7] “Seeing her hosts stunned and overwhelmed by Viśvāmitra’s weapons, Vasiṣṭha commanded: ‘Wish-fulfilling cow, create more troops

through your yogic power.' From her bellow, '*Humbhā*,' were produced Kāmbojas as radiant as the sun, while from her udders came Pahlavas, weapons in hand. From her vulva came Yavanas, from her anus, Śakas, and from the pores of her skin, Mlecchas, Hāritas, and Kirātas. In an instant, delight of the Raghus, Viśvāmitra's entire army was destroyed, with its infantry, elephants, horses, and chariot. Then the hundred sons of Viśvāmitra, seeing that their army had been destroyed by great Vasiṣṭha, the foremost reciter of the *vedas*, took up various weapons and charged him furiously. But the great seer, merely uttering the syllable '*Hum*,' consumed them all. And so, in a single moment, the sons of Viśvāmitra, horses, chariots, infantry, and all were reduced to ashes by great Vasiṣṭha.

[8–12] "When the renowned Viśvāmitra saw that his sons and his army had been annihilated, he was ashamed and sank into gloomy thought. Like the ocean becalmed or a snake whose fangs are broken, like the sun in eclipse, he was suddenly deprived of his splendor. With his sons and army slain, he grew dejected, like a bird whose wings are clipped. His pride demolished, his energy sapped, he grew depressed. So, appointing his one surviving son as king, he said, 'Rule the earth according to the code of the kshatriyas,' and entered the forest without delay. He went to the slopes of the Himalayas, frequented by *kinnaras* and serpents, and there that great ascetic performed austerities to gain the favor of the great god Śiva.

[13–18] "After some time, that lord of gods, the granter of boons, whose emblem is the bull, revealed himself to the great sage Viśvāmitra. He said: 'For what purpose are you practicing austerities, your majesty? Say what you want to say. Name the boon you desire, for I am the granter of boons.' Addressed in this fashion by the great god Śiva, the great ascetic Viśvāmitra prostrated himself and said these words: 'If you are satisfied with me, great god without sin, then please teach me the science of arms, with its ancillary and secondary sciences, *upaniṣads*, and secret spells. God without sin, grant me knowledge of whatever weapons are known among the gods, *dānavas*, great seers, *gandharvas*, and *yakṣas*. Through your grace, god of gods, let what I desire come to pass.' The lord of gods said, 'So be it,' and returned to heaven.

[19–23] "And now the mighty royal seer, already proud, was filled with still greater pride upon receiving those weapons. Swelling with might like the ocean on the full moon day, he regarded the eminent seer Vasiṣṭha as

good as dead. Returning to the sage's ashram, the king let fly his weapons, by which, through their blazing energy, the entire ascetics' grove was consumed. And when the sages saw the weapons discharged by wise Viśvāmitra, they were terrified and fled in their hundreds in all directions. Even Vasiṣṭha's disciples and the beasts and birds were frightened of the danger and fled by the thousands in all directions.

[24–28] "In what seemed but a moment, great Vasiṣṭha's ashram was as empty and silent as a desert despite Vasiṣṭha's repeated cries of: 'Don't be frightened. I shall destroy the son of Gādhi as the sun, bringer of light, destroys the mist.' When he had spoken in this fashion, the mighty Vasiṣṭha, foremost reciter of the *vedas*, spoke these words in wrath to Viśvāmitra: 'You fool, since your conduct is so depraved that you would wreck an ashram that has so long flourished, you shall die.' So saying, in a towering rage, he quickly raised his staff, which was like a second rod of Yama, the god of death, and stood there like the smokeless fire of universal destruction."

Sarga 55

[1–4] "When Vasiṣṭha had spoken to him in this fashion, mighty Viśvāmitra fired the divine weapon of Agni, crying, 'Stand! Stand!' Holy Vasiṣṭha then spoke these words in anger: 'Here I am, you kshatriya in name only. Let us see just how mighty you really are. Son of Gādhi, I shall crush your pride in your weapons. What comparison is there between your kshatriya power and the immense power of a brahman? You are a disgrace to the kshatriyas and shall now witness my divine brahmanical power!'

[5–13] "And so the great and terrible divine weapon of Agni, released by Gādhi's son, was quenched by the brahman's staff, like the fierceness of fire by water. Enraged, the son of Gādhi then fired the Vāruṇa, Raudra, Aindra, Pāśupata, Aiṣīka, Mānava, Mohana, Gāndharva, Svāpana, Jṛmbhaṇa, Mohana, Saṃtāpana, Vilāpana, Śoṣaṇa, Dāraṇa, the irresistible Vajra, Brahmā's noose, Kāla's noose, Varuṇa's noose, the coveted divine weapon Pināka, the Śuṣka and Ārdra lightning bolts, the divine weapon Daṇḍa, the divine weapons Paiśāca and Krauñca, the discus of Dharma, the discus of Kāla, the discus of Viṣṇu, and the divine weapons Mathana, and Hayaśiras as well as that of Vāyu. Then he hurled a pair of spears, the Kaṅkāla and the Musala, that great divine weapon of the *vidyādharas*, the dreadful divine

weapon of Kāla, the dreadful divine weapon Triśūla, the Kāpāla, and the Kañkaṇa. Indeed, delight of the Raghus, he hurled all these divine weapons at Vasiṣṭha, the foremost reciter of the *vedas*. But a wondrous thing occurred: the son of Brahmā engulfed them all with his staff.

[14–19] “When all these divine weapons had been rendered harmless, the delight of Gādhi hurled Brahmā’s divine weapon. Seeing that divine weapon raised, the gods, with Agni at their head, the divine seers, *gandharvas*, and great serpents were terrified. And when Brahmā’s divine weapon was released, the three worlds shook with fear. But, Rāghava, through his brahmanical power, Vasiṣṭha swallowed up even Brahmā’s great and terrible divine weapon with his brahman’s staff. And once he had swallowed up Brahmā’s divine weapon, great Vasiṣṭha’s appearance became fierce and very dreadful, stupefying the three worlds. For from every pore of great Vasiṣṭha’s body, there sprang, like sparks, smoky tongues of flame. Raised in his hand, like a second rod of Yama, Vasiṣṭha’s brahmanical staff blazed like the smokeless fire of universal destruction.

[20–24] “Then the hosts of sages praised Vasiṣṭha, foremost reciter of the *vedas*, saying: ‘Brahman, your might is infallible. Restrain this power with your own power. Brahman, you have defeated the great ascetic Viśvāmitra. Be gracious, foremost reciter of *vedas*. Let the worlds be free of this alarm.’ Addressed in this fashion, the mighty ascetic calmed himself, and Viśvāmitra, humiliated, sighed and said: ‘To hell with the power of the kshatriyas. Only the power of a brahman’s blazing energy is power indeed. All my divine weapons have been destroyed by a single brahman’s staff. Therefore, when I have reflected on this and calmed my mind and senses, I shall undertake great austerities, for this alone will make me too a brahman.’ ”

Sarga 56

[1–5] “This then, Rāghava, is the way in which the mighty ascetic Viśvāmitra began his feud with the great Vasiṣṭha. Sick at heart, remembering his defeat, and sighing repeatedly, he then traveled to the south with his queen. There he engaged in extreme and awesome austerities. Eating fruit and roots and controlling his senses, he engaged in extreme austerities. In time, several sons were born to him. They were devoted to truth and righteousness, and their names were Haviṣpanda,

Madhuṣpanda, Dṛḍhanetra, and Mahāratha. When a full thousand years had passed in this way, Brahmā, grandfather of the worlds, spoke sweet words to the ascetic Viśvāmitra: 'Son of Kuśika, your austerities have won for you the worlds to which royal seers aspire. By virtue of your austerity we acknowledge you as a royal seer.'

[6–9] "When he had finished this speech, the powerful supreme lord of all the worlds went first to Indra's heaven, Triviṣṭapa, with the gods and then to the Brahmaloka, his own realm. But Viśvāmitra, upon hearing that, became dejected. Lowering his face in shame and filled with great sorrow, he said this: 'I have performed the most severe austerities, yet all the gods and hosts of seers regard me as a mere royal seer. I do not consider this a fitting recompense for my austerities.' Having come to this decision, Kākutstha, that great, supremely self-controlled ascetic, once more performed the most extreme austerities.

[10–15] "Now, at that very time, there was a descendant of the Ikṣvāku dynasty known as Triśaṅku. He had conquered his senses and spoke the truth. Once, Rāghava, he conceived the following plan: 'I will perform a sacrifice such that I shall ascend to the highest realm of the gods in my own body.' He summoned Vasiṣṭha and told him of his intention, but the great Vasiṣṭha simply told him, 'That's impossible!' So, since Vasiṣṭha had refused him, he went to the south where the sons of Vasiṣṭha, given to prolonged austerities, were practicing austerity. There mighty Triśaṅku saw Vasiṣṭha's hundred brilliantly radiant and renowned sons performing their austerities. Approaching those great sons of his *guru* with his face somewhat lowered in shame, the mighty king saluted them in due order. Then, cupping his hands in reverence, he addressed them all:

[16–20] " 'I have come as a refugee, seeking refuge with you, for you alone can give me refuge. Bless you, I have been refused by the great Vasiṣṭha. I wish to perform a great sacrifice. Please permit it. I am bowing before my *guru*'s sons in order to secure their favor. Bowing my head, I beg you brahmans, firm in your austerities. Please, gentlemen, together offer sacrifice for me, so that I may attain, in this very body, the world of the gods. Since Vasiṣṭha has refused me, ascetics, I can see no other recourse but you, my *guru*'s sons. Our *purohita* has always been the last resort of all Ikṣvākus. After him, gentlemen, you are my gods.' "

Sarga 57

[1–5] “Now, when the hundred sons of the seer heard Triśaṅku’s words, Rāma, they were enraged and replied to the king: ‘You fool, you have been refused by your *guru*, who always speaks the truth. How dare you go beyond him and come to someone else? Your *purohita* has always been the final resort of all Ikṣvākus. It is impossible to circumvent the word of one who speaks the truth. If the holy seer Vasiṣṭha has told you, “That’s impossible,” how can we undertake this sacrifice of yours? You are a fool, best of men. Now go back to your city. Your majesty, the holy seer is able to perform such a sacrifice as would give him control over all the three worlds.’

[6–8] “Upon hearing these words, the syllables of which were slurred with anger, the king addressed them once again, saying: ‘So! I am refused by both my *guru* and my *guru*’s sons. Very well, then, I shall find some other way. Ascetics, I bid you farewell.’ When the sons of the seer heard those words with their horrifying implications, they flew into a towering rage and cursed him, ‘You shall become a *caṇḍāla*!’ So saying, the great men entered their ashram.

[9–11] “And so, when the night had passed, the king was transformed into a *caṇḍāla*. He became black and coarse, with black garments and unkempt hair. His ornaments were of iron, his garlands and ointment from the cremation ground. Seeing him in the guise of a *caṇḍāla*, Rāma, the townsfolk, even his counselors and courtiers, abandoned him and ran away together. The king was all alone, Kākutstha. Supremely self-controlled, but suffering torment day and night, he went to the ascetic Viśvāmitra.

[12–17] “Bless you, Rāma. When the sage Viśvāmitra saw the ruined king in the guise of a *caṇḍāla*, he was moved to compassion, and it was this compassion that led the powerful and supremely righteous sage to speak to the dreadful-looking king: ‘Why have you come here, mighty prince? Heroic lord of Ayodhyā, it is a curse that has made you a *caṇḍāla*.’ Hearing these words, the eloquent *caṇḍāla* king cupped his hands in reverence and spoke to him who was skilled in speech: ‘I have been refused both by my *guru* and my *guru*’s sons. I have suffered this calamity without having accomplished my desire. “May I enter heaven in this body!” such was my dream, kind sir. Yet I have performed a hundred sacrifices and gained nothing by it.

[18–23] " 'I have never told a lie, nor will I ever, though I have come upon hard times, kind sir. This I swear to you by the code of the kshatriyas. I have performed many kinds of sacrifices, ruled my subjects in righteousness, and satisfied my great *gurus* with my virtuous conduct. Yet, though I strive continually for righteousness, bull among sages, and wish to offer sacrifice, my *gurus* are not satisfied. And so I think that fate alone is supreme and human effort good for nothing. Everything is overcome by fate. Our final recourse is to fate. Please show your grace to me, for in my sore affliction I must seek it. My fate has brought all my good works to nothing. I shall not seek for any other refuge; for there is no other refuge left to me. Please try through human effort to overcome the power of fate.' "

Sarga 58

[1–5] "When the king had spoken in this fashion, Kuśika's son took pity on him and spoke sweet words directly to him, although his appearance was that of a *caṇḍāla*: 'Welcome, Ikṣvāku, my son. I know you are a righteous man. Have no fear, bull among kings, I shall be your refuge. Your majesty, I shall summon all the great seers, holy in their every act, as my assistants in this sacrifice. Then, free from all anxiety, you may perform your sacrifice. You shall ascend bodily to heaven and in the very form you now possess, the one created by your *gurus*' curse. Lord of men, I feel that heaven is already within your grasp, for you have come to me, a Kauśika, for refuge, and I can well provide it.'

[6–9] "After speaking in this fashion, the mighty man gave instructions to his wise and righteous sons concerning the preparations for the sacrifice. Then he summoned all his disciples and addressed them in these words: 'My sons, on my authority you are to bring all truly learned men, the foremost of the seers, with their disciples and sacrificial priests—all those who are friendly to us. And should anyone, provoked by the force of my words, say anything in disrespect, you are to report to me the whole of his speech, omitting nothing.'

[10–16] "Heeding these words and following his instructions, they dispersed in all directions. And so it was that vedic scholars came there from all parts of the country. All his disciples then rejoined that blazingly splendid sage and reported to him what all the vedic scholars had said:

‘Hearing your proclamation, twice-born brahmans are gathering in every part of the country. All of them are coming except Mahodaya. But listen, bull among sages, to all the words, their syllables slurred with anger, of Vasiṣṭha’s hundred sons: “How can the gods and seers in a sacrificial assembly partake of the offerings of a man whose sacrificial priest is a kshatriya, especially when he himself is a *caṇḍāla*? Or is the patronage of this Viśvāmitra sufficient to ensure that the great brahmans will go to heaven even after having eaten a *caṇḍāla*’s food?” Such, tiger among sages, were the contemptuous words uttered with reddened eyes by Mahodaya and all of Vasiṣṭha’s sons.’

[17–23] “When the bull among sages heard these words, his own eyes grew red with rage, and he spoke in anger: ‘Since they revile me, who am not to be reviled, engaged as I am in fierce austerities, these vile creatures will without doubt be reduced to ashes. Today Kāla’s noose has led them to the abode of Vaivasvata, lord of death. May they all become keepers of the dead for seven hundred lifetimes. May they wander through the world as Muṣṭikas, vile outcastes, hideous to look upon and loathsome in their occupation, their daily food the flesh of dogs. The evil-minded Mahodaya too has reviled me who am not to be reviled. Let him become a tribesman of the Niṣādas, reviled among all peoples. Pitiless, intent upon destroying life, he shall drag out a long and miserable life for angering me.’ Having uttered these words in the midst of the seers, the great sage Viśvāmitra, a mighty ascetic, fell silent.”

Sarga 59

[1–7] “After mighty Viśvāmitra had ruined Mahodaya and the sons of Vasiṣṭha through the power of his austerities, he spoke in the midst of the seers: ‘Here stands Triśaṅku, a pious and generous heir of Ikṣvāku. Because he wishes to enter the world of the gods in this body of his, he has had to seek refuge with me. Gentlemen, let us offer a sacrifice such that he may ascend to the world of the gods in his own body.’ When they heard Viśvāmitra’s words, all the great seers, who knew what was right, assembled and spoke together in keeping with righteousness: ‘This sage, the heir of Kuśika, is extremely irritable. There can be no doubt but that we must do whatever he commands and do it properly. For the holy man is like fire. If angered, he will surely curse us. So let the sacrifice commence so

that Ikṣvāku's heir may go to heaven in his body through Viśvāmitra's power.' Then crying, 'Let the sacrifice commence,' they all took part in it.

[8–14] "When the great seers had spoken in this fashion, they performed the various ritual acts. But the principal officiant of that sacrifice was the mighty Viśvāmitra himself. The sacrificial priests, skilled in vedic *mantras*, performed every rite to the accompaniment of vedic *mantras* in due order and according to precept and ritual injunctions. Then, after a long time, the great ascetic Viśvāmitra summoned the gods to come for their portions. But although they were summoned to come for their portions, not one of the gods came. The great sage Viśvāmitra was filled with rage. Angrily raising a sacrificial ladle, he said this to Triśaṅku: 'Lord of men, behold the power of my slowly garnered austerity. Through this immense power, I shall now conduct you bodily to heaven. Ascend bodily to heaven, lord of men, difficult though it may be. For I have garnered for myself some small fruit of my austerity, and through the power of that, your majesty, you shall ascend bodily to heaven.'

[15–21] "No sooner had the sage spoken these words, Kākutstha, than the lord of men ascended bodily to heaven before the very eyes of the sages. But when Indra, the chastiser of Pāka, saw that Triśaṅku had arrived in the world of the gods, he and all the hosts of gods said this: 'Go back, Triśaṅku. There is no place for you in heaven. You fool, you have been ruined by the curse of your *gurus*. Fall headfirst back to earth!' Addressed in this fashion by the great lord Indra, Triśaṅku fell back again, crying out to the ascetic Viśvāmitra, 'Save me!' Kauśika heard him crying out; and, displaying his fierce anger, he called out, 'Stop! Stop!' Then, standing among the seers, beside himself with rage, the renowned and mighty sage, like a second Prajāpati, lord of creatures, created a whole new set of constellations in the south, fashioning another constellation of the Seven Seers in the southern portion of the sky.

[22–24] "When he had created this new set of constellations, he spoke, choking with rage: 'I will create another Indra, or perhaps the world should be without an Indra.' And in his wrath he began to create even gods. At this, the bulls among gods and the hosts of seers became thoroughly alarmed and spoke soothing words to great Viśvāmitra: 'Illustrious ascetic, this king has been ruined by his *gurus*' curse; he is not worthy of bodily entering heaven.'

[25–28] “Now when the bull among sages, Kauśika, heard those words of the gods, he spoke grave words to them in reply: ‘Bless you, I made a solemn promise to King Triśaṅku that he should ascend bodily to heaven. I dare not make it false. Triśaṅku—in his bodily form—shall remain in heaven forever. And all my constellations shall endure. Yes, all these things that I created shall last as long as the worlds endure. You must all agree to this, O gods.’

[29–33] “Addressed in this fashion, all the gods replied to the bull among sages: ‘So be it, bless you. Let all your many constellations remain in the sky outside the circuit of the sun, which shines on all men. And, best of sages, let Triśaṅku, blazing brightly and looking like a god, remain head downwards, one among those shining stars.’ Then, praised by all the gods and seers, the righteous and mighty Viśvāmitra replied, ‘Very well.’ And so, best of men, at the end of the sacrifice, the gods and great ascetic sages departed just as they had come.”

Sarga 60

[1–4] “When the great Viśvāmitra saw that the seers had departed, tiger among men, he spoke to all the forest dwellers: ‘Since this great obstacle arose here in the southern region, we shall go to some other region and practice our austerities there. Great men, let us go and practice our austerities undisturbed at Puṣkara in the sparsely peopled west. That is the best of all ascetics’ forests.’ Having said this, the great and powerful sage performed severe and difficult austerities at Puṣkara, subsisting only on roots and fruit.

[5–8] “Now just at that very time, lord of Ayodhyā, a king known as Ambarīṣa undertook a sacrifice. But while he was engaged in that sacrifice, Indra carried off the sacrificial victim, and, since the victim was lost, the priest said to the king: ‘Your majesty, today, through your carelessness, the sacrificial victim has been stolen. Lord of men, such lapses destroy a king who does not guard against them. Bull among men, there is only one way to expiate this lapse, and it is a very serious one indeed. Quickly, while the rite is still in progress, you must either recover the victim or replace it with a man.’

[9–15] “Upon hearing the words of his preceptor, bull among men, the wise king sought to find a victim in exchange for thousands of cows. Now it

happened, delight of the Raghus, my son, that in searching regions, countries, cities, forests, and holy ashrams, one after the other, the lord of the earth encountered Ṛcīka in Bhṛgutunda, seated with his wife and sons. The mighty and immeasurably splendid royal seer prostrated himself, propitiating the brahman-seer Ṛcīka, blazing with ascetic power. Then, after inquiring about his well-being in all respects, he said these words: 'If, illustrious Bhārgava, you will sell me your son for a hundred thousand cows to be my sacrificial victim, I will have accomplished my purpose. For I have wandered over every country and have still not found a victim suitable for sacrifice. So please give me one of your sons for a price.' Addressed in this fashion, mighty Ṛcīka said these words: 'Best of men, I would not sell my eldest son for anything.'

[16–22] "But when she heard Ṛcīka's words, the ascetic woman, mother of his great sons, spoke to Ambarīṣa, that tiger among men: 'Your majesty, you must realize that I too have a favorite, Śunaka, my youngest. For just as the eldest are usually dearest to their fathers, best of men, so are the youngest to their mothers. Therefore, I shall keep my youngest son.' But after the sage and his wife had spoken, Rāma, Śunaḥśepa, their middle son, spoke for himself: 'My father says that the eldest cannot be sold, and my mother says the same of the youngest. So I gather that the middle son has been sold. Lead me away, your majesty.' And so the lord of men departed, delight of the Raghus, delighted to have gotten Śunaḥśepa for a hundred thousand cows. Quickly placing Śunaḥśepa in his chariot, the renowned and mighty royal seer Ambarīṣa sped away."

Sarga 61

[1–6] "Having taken Śunaḥśepa, delight of the Raghus, best of men, the renowned king stopped to rest at midday in Puṣkara. While the king was resting, the renowned Śunaḥśepa wandered over to the splendid Puṣkara lake, where he saw Viśvāmitra. His face downcast, miserable with thirst and fatigue, he fell into the sage's lap, Rāma, crying: 'I have no mother and no father, nor kinsmen anywhere on either side. Kind sir, bull among sages, please save me, if it can be done with righteousness. For you are a saviour, best of sages, and a helper to all. With calm mind, protect me who have no protector, in such a way that the king may accomplish his purpose and I may attain the heavenly world after a long and healthy life and the

performance of unexcelled austerities. Righteous man, please save me from calamity, as a father would a son.'

[7–11] "Upon hearing those words of his, the great ascetic Viśvāmitra soothed him in various ways, then turned to his own sons and said: 'Fathers, seeking what is good, beget sons for the sake of their own welfare in the next world. The time for the accomplishment of that purpose is now at hand. This boy, the son of a sage, is seeking refuge with me. My sons, you must do him a favor at the cost of your lives. All of you have done your duties well and have made righteousness your highest goal. Now, as sacrificial victims of the lord of men, you shall glut the sacred fire. In this way, Śunaḥśepa will have a protector, the sacrifice will be unimpeded, the gods will be satisfied, and my word proved true.'

[12–16] "But, best of men, the sage's sons, Madhuṣyanda and the rest, hearing his words, replied with arrogance and disrespect: 'How is it, lord, that you would abandon your own sons to save the son of another? We regard this as a forbidden act, like the eating of dog's flesh.' Now, when the bull among sages heard what his sons had said, his eyes grew red with rage and he began to curse them: 'The dreadful and hair-raising words you mouth so brazenly, contradicting what I have said, are utterly to be censured from the standpoint of righteousness. You shall all dwell on earth for a full one thousand years as eaters of dog's flesh, caste-fellows of Vasiṣṭha's sons.'

[17–21] "Then, after he had cursed his sons, the best of sages addressed the afflicted Śunaḥśepa, providing him an infallible means of protection: 'When you are brought to Viṣṇu's sacrificial post, bound with the sacred cords and adorned with red garlands and ointment, you must invoke Agni, god of fire, with sacred speech. Son of a sage, you must chant these two divine stanzas at Ambarīṣa's sacrifice. Then you shall accomplish your purpose.' Śunaḥśepa mastered the two stanzas, with deep concentration. Then, hastening, he spoke to Ambarīṣa, lion among kings: 'Mighty lion among kings, let us go quickly to the place of sacrifice. Return, lord of kings, and enter a state of consecration.'

[22–27] "Upon hearing the words of the seer's son, the king was filled with joyful anticipation and went swiftly, but vigilantly, to the sacrificial ground. There, with the consent of the officiating priests, the king had his victim marked with the sacred signs and clothed in red. Then he had him

bound to the sacrificial post. But once he was bound, the son of the sage praised the two gods, Indra and Indra's younger brother, Viṣṇu, in the prescribed fashion with those excellent stanzas. Thousand-eyed Indra was pleased and gratified by that secret hymn of praise, Rāghava, and he granted long life to Śunaḥśepa. And as for the king, Rāma, best of men, he obtained manifold fruits from that sacrifice through the grace of thousand-eyed Indra. At last, best of men, the great ascetic, righteous Viśvāmitra, took up austerity for another thousand years at Puṣkara."

Sarga 62

[1–3] "When a thousand years had passed and the great sage had bathed upon completion of his vow, all the gods approached him in their desire to grant him the fruit of his austerities. Mighty Brahmā spoke very pleasing words to him, 'Bless you! Through the holy rites in which you have engaged, you have become a seer.' Then, having spoken to him in this fashion, the lord of the gods returned to heaven. But mighty Viśvāmitra only plunged himself once more into profound austerity.

[4–8] "Now, after a long time, best of men, Menakā, the most beautiful of the *apsarases*, came to bathe at Puṣkara. The mighty son of Kuśika saw Menakā there, unrivaled in beauty, like a streak of lightning in a rain cloud. The moment he saw her, the sage came under the spell of Kandarpa, god of love, and said this: 'Welcome, *apsaras*. Come and live here in my ashram. Bless you, please be gracious to me, for I am infatuated by Madana, the god of love.' Since he spoke to her in this manner, that exquisite woman made her home there, and in this way a great obstacle to his austerities arose for Viśvāmitra. And so, ten years passed pleasantly, gentle Rāghava, while she was living in Viśvāmitra's ashram.

[9–14] "But when that period had elapsed, the great sage Viśvāmitra was ashamed of himself and became prey to grief and anxiety. Soon an angry thought crossed the sage's mind, delight of the Raghus: 'All of this, this great theft of my ascetic power, is the work of the gods! Ten years have passed like a single day and night with me a victim of love's infatuation. Truly an obstacle has presented itself to me.' Sighing, the eminent sage was made miserable by regret. Still, seeing the frightened *apsaras* trembling, her hands cupped in a gesture of supplication, Viśvāmitra, the son of Kuśika, dismissed her with gentle words, Rāma, and went to the northern

mountains. Determined to succeed, that renowned sage made a supreme resolution, and coming to the banks of the Kauśikī River, he engaged in truly dreadful austerities.

[15–18] "After he had been engaged in such dreadful austerity for a thousand years on the northern mountains, the gods became alarmed. So all the gods and hosts of seers assembled and took counsel together, saying, 'Very well! Let the son of Kuśika receive the title "great seer."' Heeding those words of the gods, Brahmā, the grandfather of all the worlds, spoke sweet words to the ascetic Viśvāmitra: 'Hail, great seer. Kauśika, my son, I am pleased by your fierce austerity. I grant you greatness and preeminence among seers.'

[19–21] "But when the ascetic Viśvāmitra heard Grandfather Brahmā's speech, he bowed, cupping his hands in reverence, and replied: 'If, holy one, because of the holy actions I have performed, you had addressed me by the unequaled designation "brahman-seer," then I would have been shown to have truly conquered my senses.' Brahmā, however, merely replied: 'So far you have not conquered your senses. Exert yourself!' Having said this, he returned to heaven.

[22–26] "Therefore, when the gods had departed, the great sage Viśvāmitra continued his austerities, standing unsupported, his arms raised, his only sustenance the air. In summer the ascetic kept the five fires, during the rains he lived outdoors, and in the winter he stood in water day and night. In this fashion, he practiced the most dreadful austerities for a thousand years. Now when the great sage Viśvāmitra adopted these austerities, Vāsava and the gods were greatly alarmed. Śakra and all the Marut hosts spoke to the *apsaras* Rambhā in words to their advantage and to the disadvantage of Kauśika."

Sarga 63

[1–6] " 'Rambhā, there is an important task you must undertake on behalf of the gods. You must seduce Kauśika by infatuating him with love for you.' But, Rāma, the *apsaras* was dismayed at being addressed in this fashion by thousand-eyed Indra, wise lord of the gods. Cupping her hands in reverence, she replied: 'Lord of the gods, the great sage Viśvāmitra is fearsome. He will unquestionably unleash his dreadful wrath on me. O God, I am afraid. Be merciful.' But though she stood there trembling, her hands

cupped in supplication, thousand-eyed Indra merely replied: ‘Have no fear, Rambhā. Now please carry out my instructions. For I shall take a *kokila*’s form to captivate his heart. Then, when spring has come and trees are at their loveliest, I’ll stand beside you together with Kandarpa, god of love. Rambhā, you must put on your most beautiful and radiant form and infatuate the ascetic seer Kauśika.’

[7–12] “When that seductive woman had heard his words, she made herself surpassingly beautiful, and, with an enchanting smile, she set out to seduce Viśvāmitra. He heard the sound of the *kokila* singing sweetly, and his heart was delighted when he saw her. But the sight of Rambhā and the sound of her incomparable singing aroused suspicion in the sage. He recognized it all as the work of thousand-eyed Indra, and, overcome with rage, the son of Kuśika, bull among sages, cursed Rambhā: ‘Unfortunate Rambhā, since you would seduce me, who seek to conquer lust and anger, you shall be turned to stone for ten thousand years. You have been defiled by my wrath, Rambhā. But you shall be saved by a mighty brahman with great ascetic power.’

[13–15] “But no sooner had the great sage, mighty Viśvāmitra, uttered these words than he regretted it. For he had been unable to control his anger. Nonetheless, through the force of his dreadful curse, Rambhā turned, then and there, to stone. But Indra and Kandarpa, upon hearing the great seer’s words, slipped away. Now that the mighty sage, his senses yet unmastered, had wasted his austerity through anger, Rāma, he found no peace of mind.”

Sarga 64

[1–4] “After this, Rāma, the great sage abandoned the region of the Himalayas and went to the east, where he performed truly fearsome austerities. He undertook the unsurpassed vow of a thousand-year silence, Rāma, performing unparalleled and virtually impossible austerities. And when those thousand years had passed, the great sage, who had been tested by so many distractions, had become just like a piece of wood, and anger could no longer seize him in its grip. His splendor stupefied the gods, *gandharvas*, serpents, *asuras*, and *rākṣasas*. His ascetic power dimmed their innate luster. In great dejection, they all spoke to Grandfather Brahmā:

[5–9] " 'O God, we have seduced and angered the great sage Viśvāmitra in many ways, yet still he increases in ascetic power. No sin at all, not even a minute one, is to be found in him. If he is not granted what his heart desires, then, with his ascetic powers, he will destroy the three worlds along with their moving and unmoving contents. Already, all directions are clouded and nothing can be seen. All the oceans are agitated and the mountains are crumbling. The earth trembles and the wind blows wildly. O God, we must propitiate that holy sage, who is blazing with great splendor like a fire, lest he set his mind upon destruction. The three worlds are aflame, just as they were long ago with the fire of universal destruction. Grant him whatever he wants, even the kingdom of the gods.'

[10–15] "Then the host of the gods, with Grandfather Brahmā at their head, spoke sweet words to great Viśvāmitra: 'Hail, brahman-seer! We are well satisfied with your austerities. Kauśika, through your fierce austerities, you have become a brahman. The Marut hosts and I now grant you long life, brahman. Bless you! May you attain happiness. You may go now, kind sir, just as you please.' The great sage was delighted to hear these words of Grandfather Brahmā and all the denizens of heaven. Prostrating himself, he spoke: 'If I have really gained the status of a brahman and long life, let the sacred syllables *oṃ* and *vaṣaṭ* and the *vedas* be fully revealed to me. And, O gods, Vasiṣṭha, son of Brahmā, foremost among those who know the *vedas* of the kshatriyas and brahmans, must himself address me by this title. If this, my greatest wish, is granted, then, bulls among gods, you may depart.'

[16–20] "And so the gods propitiated Vasiṣṭha, foremost in vedic recitation. Then, saying, 'So be it,' the brahman-seer befriended him. He told him: 'You are a brahman-seer. There can be no doubt of it. Everything has turned out well for you.' Then, when he had spoken in this fashion, all the gods departed as they had come. But righteous Viśvāmitra, having at last attained the unsurpassed status of a brahman, paid homage to the brahman-seer Vasiṣṭha, foremost in vedic recitation. When he had thus accomplished his desire, he wandered over the entire earth, unwavering in his austerities. And that, Rāma, is how this great man attained the status of a brahman. Rāma, he is the greatest of sages. He is austerity incarnate. He is always the highest authority and the ultimate resort of power."

[21–28] When Janaka had heard Śatānanda's tale there in the presence of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, he cupped his hands in reverence and addressed the

son of Kuśika: “I am indeed fortunate and grateful, righteous bull among sages, that you have come to my sacrifice with the Kākutsthas. I have been purified by you, brahman, by the very sight of you, great sage. Just meeting you enriches me with manifold blessings. Mighty brahman, the great Rāma and I have heard about your great austerities recounted here at length. The officiants assembled at our sacrificial session, too, have heard about your many virtues. Your austerity and might are both immeasurable. Truly, son of Kuśika, your virtues are immeasurable forever. Never will I tire of hearing the wonderful stories about you, lord, but, best of sages, the orb of the sun is sinking low, and it is time for the sacrifice to begin. Please come to see me once again tomorrow morning, mighty man. I bid you welcome, best of ascetics. Now please excuse me.”

[29–30] When Vaideha, lord of Mithilā, surrounded by his preceptors and kinsmen, had spoken in this fashion to the best of sages, he quickly circled him in reverence. Then righteous Viśvāmitra, reverenced by the great seers, went to his own quarters with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.

Sarga 65

[1–8] In the clear dawn, Janaka, the lord of men, performed his ritual duties and summoned great Viśvāmitra and the two Rāghavas. The righteous man paid homage to him and the two Rāghavas with rites set down in the traditional texts and then spoke: “Welcome to you, holy one. What can I do for you, sinless man? Command me, sir, for I am yours to command.” Addressed in this fashion by great Janaka, the righteous sage, skilled in speech, said these words to that hero: “These two kshatriyas are the world-renowned sons of Daśaratha. They wish to see that foremost of bows that you have in your possession. Please show it to them, and once they have attained their desire by seeing the bow, the princes will return home as they please.” Addressed in this fashion, Janaka replied to the great sage: “You must first learn the purpose for which the bow is here. Holy man, there was once a king named Devarāta, the sixth in descent from Nimi. Great Śiva left it in his hands as a trust.

[9–15] “Long ago, at the time of the destruction of Dakṣa’s sacrifice, the mighty Rudra bent this bow, and in his anger, spoke contemptuously to the gods: ‘Since you failed to set aside a portion for me who desire a portion, O gods, I shall cut off your precious heads with this bow.’ In despair, bull

among sages, the gods all propitiated him, Bhava, the lord of gods, so that, at length, he was pleased with them. Filled with pleasure, he gave the bow to all the great gods. And, lord, it was that very jewel of a bow, belonging to the great god of gods, that was given as a trust to our forebear. Now once, as I was ploughing a field, a girl sprang up behind my plough. I found her as I was clearing the field, and she is thus known by the name Sītā, 'Furrow.' Sprung from the earth, she has been raised as my daughter, and, since she was not born from the womb, my daughter has been set apart as one for whom the only bride-price is great strength.

[16–20] "Many kings have come, bull among sages, and asked for the hand of this girl who sprang from the earth and has been raised as my daughter. But, holy man, although all the rulers of the earth are asking for this girl, I have not given my daughter in marriage, reflecting that she is one whose bride-price is great strength. So all the kings assembled, bull among sages, and came to Mithilā eager to test their strength. Since they wished to test their strength, I offered them the bow. But they could not even grasp it, much less lift it. So, you must know, great sage, that when I saw these mighty kings had but little strength, I rejected them all.

[21–27] "But when the strength of the kings had been called into question, bull among sages, they all laid siege to Mithilā in great anger. Feeling themselves slighted, bull among sages, they were filled with great fury and harassed the city of Mithilā. By the time a full year had passed, all my resources were exhausted, best of sages, and I was truly miserable. So, I propitiated all the hosts of gods with austerities, and since they were pleased with me, the gods gave me an army, complete with the four divisions. Then those wicked kings, whose strength had been called into question, were broken. They fled with their ministers in all directions, stripped of their strength while being slaughtered. This, then, is the incomparably splendid bow, tiger among sages, firm in your vows. I shall show it to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. And if, sage, Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, can string this bow, I will give him my daughter who was not born from the womb."

Sarga 66

[1–4] When the great sage Viśvāmitra had listened to King Janaka's words, he said to him, "Show Rāma the bow." So King Janaka gave the order to his

ministers, “Bring the celestial bow and see that it is perfumed and adorned with garlands.” Commanded by Janaka, the ministers entered the city and, placing the bow before them, came forth on the king’s orders. Five thousand tall and brawny men were hard put to drag its eight-wheeled chest.

[5–11] But when they brought the iron chest that held the bow, his counselors addressed the godlike King Janaka: “Your majesty, best of kings, lord of Mithilā, here is the great bow, worshiped by all the kings. If you wish it, it may be seen.” Upon hearing their words, the king cupped his hands in reverence and spoke to great Viśvāmitra, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa: “Here is the great bow, brahman, that the Janakas worship and that the mighty kings were unable to string. All the hosts of gods, *asuras*, *rākṣasas*, and the foremost among the *gandharvas* and *yakṣas*, *kinnaras*, and great serpents are incapable of bending this bow, stringing it, fitting an arrow to it, drawing its string, or even lifting it. What chance is there, then, for mere men? Indeed, bull among sages, it is the greatest of bows that has been brought here. Illustrious sage, please show it to the two princes.”

[12–17] When righteous Viśvāmitra heard what Janaka had said, he turned to Rāghava and said, “Rāma, my son, behold the bow.” Following the great seer’s instructions, Rāma opened the chest in which the bow lay and regarding it closely, he then spoke: “Now, brahman, I shall touch this great bow with my hand. I shall attempt to lift and even to string it.” “Very well,” replied both the king and the sage. So, following the sage’s instructions, he easily grasped the bow in the middle. Then, as though it were mere play to him, the righteous prince, the delight of the Raghus, strung the bow as thousands watched. The mighty man affixed the bowstring and, nocking an arrow to it, drew it back. But in so doing, the best of men broke the bow in the middle.

[18–27] There was a tremendous noise as loud as a thunderclap, and a mighty trembling shook the earth, as if a mountain had been torn asunder. Of all those men, only the great sage, the king, and the two Rāghavas remained standing; the rest fell, stunned by the noise. When the people had recovered their senses, the eloquent king, free from his anxiety, cupped his hands in reverence and addressed the bull among sages: “Holy man, I have witnessed the might of Daśaratha’s son Rāma. It is marvelous and inconceivable. I had no idea of it. With Rāma, Daśaratha’s son, for her husband, my daughter Sītā will bring glory to the House of the Janakas.

And so, Kauśika, my vow that great strength should be her only bride-price has been proven true. For my daughter Sītā, as dear to me as life itself, shall be given in marriage to Rāma. Bless you, Kauśika brahman! With your permission, my counselors shall set out at once for Ayodhyā in swift chariots. With courteous words they shall bring the king to my city. And they shall tell him all about the betrothal of my daughter, whose only bride-price was great strength. They shall also tell the king that the Kākutsthas are under the sage's protection. The king will be delighted. Now, let them go swiftly and bring him here." "So be it," Kauśika replied. The righteous king then spoke to his counselors, and when they had received their orders, he dispatched them to Ayodhyā.

Sarga 67

[1–5] Instructed by Janaka, his messengers spent three nights on the road and then entered the city of Ayodhyā, their horses exhausted. In accordance with the orders of their king, the messengers entered the royal dwelling and saw the aged king, godlike Daśaratha. Cupping their hands in reverence, restrained yet free from anxiety, they all spoke sweet words to the king: "O great king, King Janaka of Mithilā, delight of his people, accompanied by priests who have performed the *agnihotra* rite, repeatedly inquires in sweet and affectionate words after the continuing well-being of you, your preceptors, *purohitas*, and attendants.

[6–12] "And, having thus made inquiry about your continuing well-being, Vaideha, the lord of Mithilā, with Kauśika's permission, addresses these words to you: 'You know my long-standing vow that my daughter's only bride-price would be great strength. You know, too, that the kings, lacking strength, have been made angry and hostile. Now, your majesty, this very same daughter of mine has been won by your heroic son, who chanced to come here following Viśvāmitra. For, your majesty, great king, the great Rāma has broken my celestial bow in the middle, before a vast assembly of the people. Therefore, I must give Sītā, whose only bride-price was great strength, to this great man. Please permit this, for I wish to make good my vow. Please come quickly, great king, with your preceptors, placing your *purohita* before you. Please come and see the two Rāghavas. Please make my happiness complete, lord of kings, for you too shall obtain happiness on account of your two sons.' "

[13–19] Such was the sweet speech of the lord of Videha, sanctioned by both Viśvāmitra and Śatānanda. When the king heard the messengers' words, he was utterly delighted. Addressing Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, and his other counselors, he spoke: "The increaser of Kausalyā's joy is staying in Videha with his brother Lakṣmaṇa, under the protection of the son of Kuśika. Great Janaka has witnessed Rāghava Kākutstha's might, and he wishes to give him his daughter. If this news pleases you, then let us go quickly to great Janaka's city. Let there be no delay." His counselors and all the great seers replied, "Excellent." At this, the king was greatly delighted and said to them, "The journey will begin tomorrow." All the virtuous counselors of Janaka, lord of men, were delighted. They spent the night there and were shown the greatest honor.

Sarga 68

[1–7] When the night had passed, King Daśaratha, in great delight, addressed Sumantra in the presence of his preceptors and kinsmen: "Have all the officers of the treasury go on ahead of us today with great wealth, all kinds of jewels, and an adequate guard. Then, see to it that all four branches of the army set forth at once with fine palanquins and carriages the moment they get my orders. Also have the brahmans—Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Jābāli, Kāśyapa, long-lived Mārkaṇḍeya, and the seer Kātyāyana—go on ahead. Then, have my chariot yoked so that no time will be lost, for the messengers are bidding me to make haste." So, in accordance with the orders of the lord of men, all four branches of the army followed behind the king, who traveled in the company of the seers. After four days on the road, he reached Videha, and the majestic King Janaka, hearing of this, prepared a welcome.

[8–12] When King Janaka met the aged King Daśaratha, protector of men, he was delighted and experienced great joy. Those two most eminent of men conversed together and were filled with delight. "Welcome, great king," said Janaka. "It is my good fortune that you have come, Rāghava. You shall experience great joy, on account of your two sons, for they have won it for you through their great strength. It is also my good fortune that the holy seer, mighty Vasiṣṭha, has come along with all the foremost twice-born brahmans, like Indra of the hundred sacrifices along with the gods. Through my good fortune, I have overcome all obstacles; my House has

been honored by an alliance with the great Rāghavas, the mightiest of all. Best of men, lord of great kings, tomorrow morning, at the end of my sacrifice, please have this marriage, already approved by the seers, performed."

[13–18] When he had heard those words of his in the presence of the seers, the lord of men, foremost among the eloquent, replied to the lord of the earth: "Long ago I learned that the receiver is dependent upon the giver. Since you know what is proper, we shall do just as you say." And when the lord of Videha heard that truthful man's most righteous and glorious words, he was moved to the highest wonder. Then all the hosts of sages, mingling with one another, in great joy, passed the night happily. And the king, having seen his sons, the two Rāghavas, was overjoyed. Then, well pleased and greatly honored by Janaka, he passed the night. Mighty Janaka, gifted with insight, also passed the night after completing both his sacrifice and the rites for his two daughters, in accordance with righteousness.

Sarga 69

[1–4] In the morning, when eloquent Janaka had completed his ritual duties with the great seers, he spoke to Śatānanda, his *purohita*: "My mighty and righteous younger brother, Kuśadhvaja, dwells in the lovely and sacred city of Sāṃkāśyā. Surrounded by a lofty palisade and washed by the river Ikṣumatī, it resembles the flying palace Puṣpaka. I wish to see that mighty man, for I regard him as the protector of my sacrifice. He should share this pleasure with me."

[5–9] Then, on the instructions of the lord of men, they went with swift horses to bring that tiger among men. And so, at the behest of the lord of men, Kuśadhvaja came like Viṣṇu at the behest of Indra. When he had made obeisance to Śatānanda and the righteous king, great Janaka, he met with the king, a lover of righteousness. He took his place upon a celestial throne, splendid and worthy of a king, and then the two heroic and immeasurably mighty brothers dispatched Sudāmana, best of counselors, saying: "Go quickly, lord of counselors, and bring the invincible and immeasurably splendid Daśaratha Aikṣvāka with his sons and ministers."

[10–15] Proceeding to the royal camp, he spied the dynast of the Raghus, and, bowing his head in obeisance, he spoke: "Heroic lord of Ayodhyā, Vaideha, the lord of Mithilā, is ready to see you, your preceptors, and your

purohita." When the king heard the words of that best of counselors, he went with his kinsmen and the host of seers to where Janaka awaited him. The king, the foremost among the eloquent, in the company of his counselors, his preceptors, and his kinsmen, then addressed Vaideha: "As you know, great king, the holy seer Vasiṣṭha is the divinity of the House of Ikṣvāku. He will speak for us in all matters. Now, with the permission of Viśvāmitra and in the presence of all the great seers, righteous Vasiṣṭha will recite my lineage in due sequence."

[16–24] Daśaratha then fell silent, and the holy and eloquent seer Vasiṣṭha addressed these words to Vaideha and his *purohita*: "Brahmā is eternal, everlasting, and imperishable; and his origins are unknowable. From him was born Marīci. Marīci's son was Kaśyapa. Vivasvant was born of Kaśyapa. And Manu, who was known as Vaivasvata, was, long ago, one of the Prajāpatis, lords of creatures. Manu's son was Ikṣvāku. This Ikṣvāku, you must know, was the first king of Ayodhyā. A son, the majestic Vikukṣi, was born to Ikṣvāku. Vikukṣi's son was the mighty and valorous Bāṇa. Bāṇa's son was the mighty and valorous Anaraṇya. From Anaraṇya was born Pṛthu. Triśaṅku was Pṛthu's son. Triśaṅku's son was the renowned Dhundhumāra. After Dhundhumāra came mighty Yuvanāśva, a great chariot-warrior. Yuvanāśva's son was the majestic Māndhātṛ, lord of the earth. A son was born to Māndhātṛ, the majestic Susandhi. Susandhi had two sons, Dhruvasandhi and Prasenajit. Dhruvasandhi had a renowned son who was known as Bharata. After Bharata was born a mighty man named Asita.

[25–32] "Next, Sagara was born with poison (*sa-gara*). After Sagara came Asamañja and after Asamañja, Aṃśumant. Dilīpa was Aṃśumant's son, and Dilīpa's was Bhagīratha. After Bhagīratha came Kakutstha, and Kakutstha's son was Raghu. Raghu's son was mighty Pravṛddha, the man-eater. He came to be known as Kalmāṣapāda, and to him was born Śaṅkhaṇa. Sudarśana was Śaṅkhaṇa's son. After Sudarśana came Agnivarṇa. Agnivarṇa's son was Śīghraga. Śīghraga's son was Maru. After Maru came Praśuśruka and after Praśuśruka, Ambarīṣa. Ambarīṣa's son was Nahuṣa, lord of the earth. Nahuṣa's son was Yayāti. And to Yayāti was born Nābhāga. Nābhāga's son was Aja. To Aja was born Daśaratha, and it is to this Daśaratha that these two brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, were born. Your majesty, the kings of the House of Ikṣvāku have been heroic,

righteous, truthful, and pure in lineage from their very beginning. And this is the royal House in which Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were born. On their behalf I ask you for your two daughters. Best of men, please bestow these two worthy women upon these equally worthy men."

Sarga 70

[1–5] When Vasiṣṭha had finished speaking in this fashion, Janaka cupped his hands in reverence and replied: "Bless you, now if you please, you shall hear me recount the genealogy of our eminent House. For, best of sages, on the occasion of his daughter's betrothal, the scion of a noble line should fully recount his genealogy. Please listen, great sage. There was once a righteous king, the mightiest of men, named Nimi, renowned for his deeds in all three worlds. His son was named Mithi, and Mithi's son was Janaka, the first of that name. After Janaka was born Udāvasu. After Udāvasu was born the righteous Nandivardhana, and Nandivardhana's son was called Suketu.

[6–10] "After Suketu, the righteous and mighty Devarāta was born. The royal seer Devarāta had a son known as Bṛhadratha. Bṛhadratha had a son, the valorous hero Mahāvīra. Mahāvīra's son was the steadfast and truly valorous Sudhṛti. And Sudhṛti's son was the righteous, nay, the very righteous Dhṛṣṭaketu. The royal seer Dhṛṣṭaketu had a son named Haryaśva. Haryaśva's son was Maru. Maru's son was Pratīndhaka. Pratīndhaka's son was righteous King Kīrtiratha. Kīrtiratha's son was known as Devamīḍha. Devamīḍha's son was Vibudha, and Vibudha's was Mahīdhraka.

[11–16] "Mahīdhraka's son was the mighty King Kīrtirāta. Mahāroman was born to the royal seer Kīrtirāta. Righteous Svarṇaroman was born to Mahāroman. Hrasvaroman was born to the royal seer Svarṇaroman. Two sons were born to that great man who knew the ways of righteousness. I am the elder, and the younger is my brother, the heroic Kuśadhvaja. My father, the lord of men, consecrated me, the elder, as king and, leaving Kuśadhvaja in my care, retired to the forest. Ever since my aged father went to heaven, I have borne this burden in accordance with righteousness and looked upon my godlike brother Kuśadhvaja with affection. Then, one time, the mighty king Sudhanvan came from Sāṃkāśya and laid siege to Mithilā.

[17–24] "He sent me a message, saying, 'You must give me both Śiva's unsurpassed bow and your daughter, lotus-eyed Sītā.' Because I did not

cede these to him, he engaged me in battle, brahman-seer. But I killed that lord of men, Sudhanvan, as he faced me in combat. And, best of sages, since I had killed Sudhanvan, the lord of men, I consecrated my heroic brother, Kuśadhvaja, as ruler of Sāṃkāśya. This is my younger brother, great sage; I am the elder. Now, bull among sages, with great pleasure I give away my two girls, Sītā to Rāma, bless you, and Ūrmilā to Lakṣmaṇa—my daughter Sītā, who is like a daughter of the gods, whose only bride-price was great strength, and Ūrmilā, my second daughter. I say it three times so there can be no doubt. With great pleasure, delight of the Raghus, I give you these two girls. Your majesty, please have the tonsure ceremony performed for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Then, bless you, you may perform the rites of ancestor worship and the wedding itself. We are now under the lunar mansion of Maghā, great-armed lord. Your majesty, you may perform the marriage ceremony in three days time under the lunar mansion of Uttarāphalgunī. You should distribute gifts on behalf of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to ensure their happiness."

Sarga 71

[1–8] When the heroic King Vaideha had finished speaking, the great sage Viśvāmitra, seconded by Vasiṣṭha, responded: "The Houses of the Ikṣvākus and the Videhas are beyond conception and beyond measure, bull among men. There is none to equal them. Your majesty, this lawful union of Sītā and Ūrmilā with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa is highly appropriate, the more so because of the perfection of their beauty. But now, best of men, hear the words that I feel bound to utter. Here is your brother, King Kuśadhvaja, who knows the ways of righteousness. Your majesty, this righteous man has two daughters unrivaled on earth for beauty. Best of men, we ask you for them to be the wives of Prince Bharata and wise Śatrughna. We ask for your two daughters, your majesty, on behalf of these two great men. For all the sons of Daśaratha are endowed with beauty and youth, like the guardians of the world, and are equal to the gods in valor. Lord of kings, holy in your every deed, through this connection with the two of you, let your flawless House be joined to that of Ikṣvāku."

[9–15] When Janaka had heard Viśvāmitra's words, which had the approval of Vasiṣṭha, he cupped his hands in reverence and addressed both bulls among sages: "Since you yourselves commend this as a fitting union

of Houses, so be it. Bless you, let the inseparable Śatrughna and Bharata take the daughters of Kuśadhvaja to be their wives. Great sage, let all four mighty princes take the hands of the four princesses on the very same day. Brahman, the wise recommend that marriages take place on the second of the two days of Phalguna, when the god Bhaga presides as Prajāpati, lord of creatures." When King Janaka had uttered these agreeable words, he rose and, cupping his hands in reverence, addressed the two eminent sages: "You have discharged my highest duty for me. I shall be the disciple of both of you forever. Now let both of you, bulls among sages, be seated on these fine thrones. This city of mine is as much Daśaratha's as is Ayodhyā. Please have no doubts as to his authority here and act accordingly."

[16–19] When Janaka Vaideha had spoken in this fashion, King Daśaratha, delight of the Raghus, was pleased and replied to the lord of the earth: "You two brothers, the lords of Mithilā, have numberless virtues. You do great honor to the seers and the hosts of kings." Then he said: "Bless you, attain happiness. I shall now return to my own quarters to perform all the rites for my departed ancestors." Taking his leave of the lord of men, the renowned King Daśaratha then placed the two lordly sages before him and departed quickly.

[20–24] Proceeding to his own quarters, the king performed the rites for his ancestors in accordance with the ritual injunctions, and, rising the next morning, he performed a splendid tonsure ceremony as befitted the occasion. The king, lord of men, in keeping with traditional practice, gave hundreds of thousands of cows to the brahmans on behalf of each of his sons. In this way, the bull among men gave away four hundred thousand milch cows with gilded horns, each with a calf and a milking vessel of fine brass. And the delight of the Raghus, devoted to his sons, gave, on the occasion of their tonsure ceremony, much additional wealth to the brahmans. Standing there surrounded by his sons after their tonsure ceremonies, the lord of men looked like the benevolent Prajāpati, lord of creatures, surrounded by the guardians of the world.

Sarga 72

[1–8] Now it happened that on the very day that the king performed that lavish tonsure ceremony, the hero Yudhājit, son of the king of Kekaya and Bharata's maternal uncle, arrived. When he had seen the king and inquired

about his well-being, he said this: “The royal lord of Kekaya affectionately inquires after your well-being,” adding, “Those whose well-being you have at heart are at present in good health. Lord of kings, lord of the earth, I would like to see my sister’s son. For that purpose, delight of the Raghus, I journeyed to Ayodhyā. But in Ayodhyā, lord of the earth, I heard that your sons had gone with you to Mithilā to be married. Therefore, I came here in haste, eager to see my sister’s son.” King Daśaratha, seeing that a cherished guest, one worthy of honor, had arrived, honored him with the utmost cordiality. He passed the night in the company of his great sons and then, placing the seers before him, proceeded to the sacrificial enclosure. At the auspicious hour called Vijaya, Rāma and his brothers, adorned with every ornament, stood before Vasiṣṭha and the other great seers and underwent the auspicious ceremony of the wedding thread.

[9–11] Holy Vasiṣṭha then went to Vaideha and addressed him as follows: “Foremost of great men, your majesty, King Daśaratha and his sons have performed the auspicious ceremony of the wedding thread and are waiting for you to give away the brides. For all affairs are best transacted directly between the giver and receiver. Now, you must carry through the splendid wedding ceremony and so fulfill your duty.”

[12–16] When great Vasiṣṭha had addressed him in this fashion, that noble and mighty man, knowing full well the ways of righteousness, replied: “Which of my chamberlains is on duty? For whose orders are you waiting? My kingdom is yours! Why do you hesitate in your own house? Best of sages, my daughters have undergone the entire ceremony of the wedding thread. They have now approached the altar, where they shine like flames of the fire. I am ready. I am standing by the altar waiting for you. Let the king perform the ceremony without delay. What are we waiting for?” When Daśaratha heard Janaka’s words, he had his sons and all the hosts of seers enter the king’s dwelling.

[17–21] King Janaka then spoke to Rāma, the increaser of Kausalyā’s delight: “This daughter of mine, Sītā, shall be your lawful wedded wife. Accept her, bless you. Take her hand in yours. Come, Lakṣmaṇa. Bless you. Accept Ūrmilā, whom I give you. Take her hand without delay.” After speaking in this fashion, Janaka addressed Bharata, saying, “Take Māṇḍavī’s hand in yours, delight of the Raghus.” Then the righteous lord of the Janakas turned to Śatrughna, saying, “Great-armed man, take

Śrutakīrti's hand in yours. All of you Kākutsthas are gentle and true to your vows; now take your wives without delay."

[22–27] Upon hearing Janaka's words and securing the approval of Vasiṣṭha, the four men took the hands of the four women in their own. Finally, in the company of their wives, the eminent Raghus reverently circled the fire, the altar, the king, and the great seers. Thus did they perform their marriage ceremony in the prescribed fashion according to the ritual injunctions. Suddenly, from the sky, there fell a great and radiant shower of blossoms accompanied by the thundering of celestial drums and the sounds of singing and musical instruments. Troupes of *apsarases* danced at the wedding of the Raghu princes, and *gandharvas* sang sweetly. It was truly miraculous. To music such as this—singing and the sound of blaring horns—those mighty men were wedded to their wives, stepping three times around the sacred fire. At last the princes, delights of the Raghus, returned to their camp with their brides. And the king, along with the host of his seers and kinsmen, followed, gazing after them.

Sarga 73

[1–5] When the night had passed, the great sage Viśvāmitra took his leave of the two kings and departed for the mountains of the north. Once Viśvāmitra had departed, King Daśaratha took his leave of Vaideha, lord of Mithilā, and quickly made ready to return to his own city. But first the king of Videha, lord of Mithilā, gave his daughters lavish gifts, including many hundreds of thousands of cows, the finest blankets, and fine silk garments. He also gave them beautifully adorned and godlike troops, including elephants, horses, chariots, and foot soldiers. The father of the brides also gave them an unsurpassed complement of male and female servants, as well as much silver, gold, pearls, and coral.

[6–10] With the greatest delight the king, lord of Mithilā, gave his daughters unsurpassed gifts. Then, having conferred enormous wealth upon them, he took his leave of Daśaratha, lord of the earth, and returned home to Mithilā. The king, lord of Ayodhyā, and his great sons, however, placed all the seers before them and departed with their army and attendants. But as the tiger among men was proceeding on his way with the Rāghavas and his company of seers, birds shrieked dreadful cries at him from all sides while all terrestrial beasts circled him reverently. Observing this, the tiger among

kings inquired of Vasiṣṭha: “The birds are savage and dreadful, and yet the beasts would seem to augur well. What is this that makes my heart tremble so? My thoughts are filled with misgivings.”

[11–15] When the great seer heard King Daśaratha’s words, he replied in sweet words: “I shall tell you the meaning of this. That which has issued from the mouths of the birds in the sky signifies a terrible and imminent danger. But the beasts indicate that this danger will be averted. You need have no anxiety.” As they were discussing this, a sudden wind arose, shaking the whole earth and knocking down the lovely trees. The sun was shrouded in darkness, and it was impossible to see in any direction. Everything was covered with ash; the entire army stood stupefied. Only Vasiṣṭha and the other seers, the king, and his sons remained conscious. The others fell, senseless.

[16–22] In that dreadful darkness, with their whole army covered in ash, they saw a dreadful-looking man as unassailable as Mount Kailāsa and as irresistible as the fire of universal destruction. Wearing a coil of matted hair, he was impossible for ordinary people to look upon, for he seemed to be blazing with some extraordinary energy. With his battle-axe slung over one shoulder and a bow—a streak of lightning it seemed—and mighty arrow in his hand, he looked like Hara, destroyer of Tripura. Seeing this dreadful-looking man, blazing like fire, the purifier, Vasiṣṭha and the other brahman sages, devoted to prayer and sacrifice, gathered together and discussed the matter among themselves, saying: “Surely he does not intend once more to exterminate the kshatriyas in his rage over his father’s murder. For, long ago, when he had slaughtered the kshatriyas, he was freed from his anger and grief. Surely he does not mean to exterminate them again!” When they had taken counsel in this fashion, the seers took guest-offerings and spoke sweet words to the dreadful Bhārgava, calling, “Rāma! Rāma!” The valorous Rāma Jāmadagnya accepted the homage of the seers. Then he turned to Rāma Dāśarathi and spoke.

Sarga 74

[1–4] “Mighty Rāma Dāśarathi, I have heard all about your extraordinary might and how you broke the bow. It is extraordinary, almost inconceivable, that you should have broken that bow; and so, when I heard about it, I came here with yet another splendid bow. Now show me how mighty you really

are. You must nock an arrow to this, Jamadagni's great bow, so dreadful to behold. If I see that you have strength enough to nock an arrow to this bow, then I shall challenge you to single combat, which is praised by men of might."

[5–9] When King Daśaratha heard these words, his face fell. Filled with despair, he cupped his hands in reverence and spoke: "Your wrath against the kshatriyas has now subsided, and you are a brahman of great renown. Please grant safe passage to my sons, for they are mere boys. You were born in the House of the Bhārgavas, ever engaged in vedic studies and holy vows. Moreover, you made a promise before thousand-eyed Indra and laid your weapons down. Concerned only with righteousness, you gave the earth to Kāśyapa and retired to the forest to make your home on Mount Mahendra. Great sage, you have come to destroy everything I have. For if Rāma is killed, none of us will survive."

[10–16] Even though Daśaratha was speaking in this fashion, the valiant Jāmadagnya paid no heed to his words, but spoke directly to Rāma: "Viśvakarman, god of craft, skillfully wrought two divine bows—splendid, world famous, indestructible, and powerful. The one you broke, Kākutstha, best of men, was the bow that destroyed the three cities after the gods gave it to three-eyed Śiva, who was thirsting for battle. But, Kākutstha, the foremost of the gods gave this, the second of those invincible bows, just as powerful as Rudra's, to Viṣṇu. Then all the gods, in their desire to determine the relative strength of Viṣṇu and black-throated Śiva, questioned Grandfather Brahmā. Understanding the purpose of the gods, Grandfather Brahmā, most truthful of all, provoked a quarrel between the two. Out of that quarrel arose a great hair-raising battle between Viṣṇu and black-throated Śiva, each of whom desired to defeat the other.

[17–22] "Then, by means of the syllable '*Hum*,' Śiva's awesomely powerful bow was unstrung, and the great three-eyed god himself was paralyzed. The gods who had assembled along with hosts of seers and celestial bards entreated the two greatest of gods so that they made peace. Seeing that Śiva's bow had been unstrung by Viṣṇu's valor, the gods and hosts of seers judged Viṣṇu to be the greater of the two. But the glorious Rudra was still angry and gave his bow and arrows into the hands of the royal seer Devarāta of Videha. But this, Rāma, is Viṣṇu's bow, a conqueror of enemy citadels. Viṣṇu gave it as a sacred trust to the Bhārgava sage

Ṛcīka. And mighty Ṛcīka gave the divine bow to his son, my father, the great Jamadagni, unrivaled in his deeds.

[23–28] "But when my father had laid his weapons down and was armed only with the might of his austerities, Arjuna, acting on a base thought, brought about his death. In my rage at learning of the unparalleled and brutal murder of my father, I exterminated the kshatriyas—generation after generation, time and time again. Having thus conquered the whole earth, Rāma, I gave it away as a fee to great Kāśyapa, holy in his deeds, at the end of a sacrifice. Then, as I was dwelling on Mount Mahendra, armed only with the might of my austerities, I heard about the breaking of the bow and came here as swiftly as I could. Rāma, here is Viṣṇu's great bow, which belonged to my father and my grandfather before him. Now take it and follow the code of the kshatriyas. This arrow is a conqueror of enemy citadels. Nock it to this best of bows if you can, Kākutstha. Then I shall challenge you to single combat."

Sarga 75

[1–8] When Dāśarathi had heard the words of Rāma Jāmadagnya, he replied, tempering his response out of respect for his father: "Bhārgava, I have heard about the feat you accomplished. We respect it, brahman, for you were only discharging your debt to your father. But, Bhārgava, you regard me as if I were some weakling, incapable of upholding the code of the kshatriyas. Now you shall witness my strength and valor for yourself." And so saying, Rāghava, with rapid stride, angrily snatched the superb weapon and the arrow from Bhārgava's hand. Stringing the bow, Rāma nocked the arrow to the string. Then Rāma addressed Rāma Jāmadagnya in wrath, saying: "I owe you reverence both because you are a brahman and for the sake of Viśvāmitra. Therefore, Rāma, I cannot loose this deadly arrow upon you. However, I shall destroy either your retreat or the incomparable worlds you have won through the power of your austerity. The choice is yours. For the divine arrow of Viṣṇu, which conquers enemy citadels and crushes with its power all pride in strength, never flies in vain."

[9–15] At this, the gods and hosts of seers put Grandfather Brahmā at their head and assembled there in their ranks to witness Rāma holding that great weapon. The *gandharvas*, *apsarases*, perfected beings, celestial bards, *kinnaras*, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, and great serpents also came to see that great

marvel. Then, as the world stood stunned and Rāma held the great bow, Rāma Jāmadagnya, robbed of his strength, stared at Rāma. Jāmadagnya was stunned to feel his strength sapped by the power of lotus-eyed Rāma and spoke to him in a voice grown very faint: "Long ago, when I gave the earth to Kāśyapa, he told me, 'You may not stay in my realm.' Therefore, Kākutstha, in obedience to my *guru* Kāśyapa's words, I made him this promise, 'Never again will I spend a night on earth.' Therefore, heroic Rāghava, please do not destroy my retreat. I shall go there with the speed of thought, to Mahendra, best of mountains.

[16–23] "But with this great arrow, Rāma, you may destroy the incomparable worlds that I have won through my austerities. Let there be no delay. From the way you handle the bow, I know you to be Viṣṇu, lord of the gods, and the imperishable slayer of Madhu. Hail, destroyer of your foes. All the hosts of gods assembled here bear witness that you are incomparable in your deeds and unrivaled in battle. And so, Kākutstha, I need not be ashamed of being bested by you, the Lord of the three worlds. Rāma, you are true to your vows; you must loose this incomparable arrow. Once the arrow is released, I shall depart for Mahendra, best of mountains." And so, when Rāma Jāmadagnya had finished speaking, the majestic and valorous Rāma Dāśarathi released the great arrow. At once, all the cardinal and intermediate directions were freed from darkness, and Rāma, still holding his weapon aloft, was praised by the gods and hosts of seers. Lord Rāma Jāmadagnya then praised Rāma Dāśarathi and, after circling him reverently, went back to his retreat.

Sarga 76

[1–5] Once Rāma had gone, Rāma Dāśarathi, calm once more, gave the bow and arrow into the hands of immeasurable Varuṇa. Then Rāma, delight of the Raghus, made obeisance to Vasiṣṭha and the other seers. Turning to his dazed father, he spoke: "Rāma Jāmadagnya is gone. Let the four divisions of the army proceed toward Ayodhyā, under the protection of you, its lord." Upon hearing Rāma's words, King Daśaratha took his son Rāghava in his arms and kissed him on the head. For the king was overjoyed at hearing the words "Rāma is gone," and, in his delight, he urged his army on and soon reached his city.

[6–8] Adorned with flags and pennants on staffs and echoing with the sound of musical instruments and song, it was lovely as the king entered it. Its royal highways were sprinkled with water, and it was beautiful with bouquets of flowers scattered everywhere. It was adorned with throngs of people, jammed with townsfolk crying out blessings, their faces gladdened at the entrance of the king. Kausalyā, Sumitrā, fair-waisted Kaikeyī, and the king's other wives busied themselves with receiving the brides.

[9–12] The king's wives welcomed illustrious Sītā, renowned Ūrmilā, and the two daughters of Kuśadhvaja. Clad in silken garments and greeted with blessings, they went at once to worship at the shrines of the gods. Then, once they had made obeisance to everyone worthy of it, all the princesses in great delight made love with their husbands in their private chambers. Having thus acquired wives and divine weapons, those bulls among men, surrounded by wealth and friends, passed their days in the service of their father.

[13–18] But the world-renowned and truly valorous Rāma surpassed them all in virtue, as self-existent Brahmā surpasses all beings. And so Rāma passed many seasons with Sītā, devoted to her and absorbed in her. And she kept him ever in her heart. Sītā was naturally dear to Rāma, for she was the wife her father had given him. Yet, because of her virtue and beauty, his love grew greater still. And yet, in her heart, she cherished her husband twice as much. Even their innermost hearts spoke clearly one to the other. But even so, Maithilī, Janaka's daughter, lovely as a goddess and beautiful even as Śrī, knew his innermost heart especially well. In the company of that lovely and noble princess who loved him so dearly, Rāma, son of a royal seer, was as well adorned as is Lord Viṣṇu, lord of the immortal gods, by Śrī.

The end of the *Bālakāṇḍa*.

a Emendation: see PVR 1: 318.

Chapter 2

The *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*

Sarga 1

[1–4] Time passed, and then one day King Daśaratha, the delight of the Raghus, spoke to Bharata, his son by Kaikeyī: “My mighty son, your mother’s brother Yudhājit, the son of the king of Kekaya, has come and is waiting to take you back home with him.” When he had heard what Daśaratha said, Kaikeyī’s son, Bharata, prepared to depart with Śatrughna. Taking leave of his father, of tireless Rāma, and of his mothers, the hero, the best of men, went off with Śatrughna.

[5–9] Delighted to have Bharata and Śatrughna with him, mighty Yudhājit returned to his native city, to the great satisfaction of his father. There, Bharata lived with his brother, enjoying the warm hospitality of his uncle Aśvapati, who showered him with all the affection one shows a son. And yet, as the mighty brothers stayed on, their every desire satisfied, they often thought with longing of aged King Daśaratha. The great king likewise often thought of his two absent sons, Bharata and Śatrughna, the equals of great Indra and Varuṇa. For he cherished every one of those four bulls among men, his sons, as if they were four arms extending from his body.

[10–14] But still, of all of them, it was mighty Rāma who brought his father the greatest joy. For he surpassed his brothers in virtue, just as the self-existent Brahmā surpasses all other beings. In Bharata’s absence Rāma and powerful Lakṣmaṇa showed reverence to their godlike father. Following his father’s orders, righteous Rāma did all that was required to please and benefit the people of the city. He scrupulously did all that his mothers required of him and attended to his *gurus*’ requirements with strict punctuality. Thus, Daśaratha was pleased with Rāma’s conduct and character, as were the brahmans, the merchants, and all who lived in the realm.

[15–21] Rāma was always even-tempered and kind spoken. Even if he were to be harshly addressed, he would not answer back. He would be

satisfied with a single act of kindness, whatever its motive, and would ignore a hundred injuries, so great was his self-control. With good men—men advanced in years, virtue, and wisdom—he would converse at every opportunity, even during breaks in his weapons practice. He was of noble descent on both sides of his family, he was upright and cheerful, truthful, and honest. Aged twice-born brahmans had seen to his training, men who were wise in the ways of righteousness and statecraft. And thus he understood the true nature of righteousness, statecraft, and personal pleasure. He was retentive and insightful, knowledgeable, and adept in the social proprieties. He was learned in the *śāstras* and skilled in the practice of them as well. [a]He was an excellent judge of men and could tell when it was appropriate to show his favor or withhold it. He knew the right means for collecting revenue and the accepted way of regulating expenditure. He had achieved preeminence in the sum total of the *śāstras*, even the most complex.

[22–28] Only after satisfying the claims of righteousness and statecraft would he give himself up to pleasure, and then never immoderately. He was a connoisseur of the fine arts and understood all aspects of political life. He was proficient in training and riding horses and elephants, eminently knowledgeable in the science of weapons, and esteemed throughout the world as a master chariot-warrior. He could head a charge and give battle and lead an army skillfully. He was invincible in combat, even if the gods and *asuras* themselves were to unite in anger against him. He was never spiteful, haughty, or envious, and he had mastered his anger. He would never look down on any creature nor bow to the will of time. By his eminent virtues the prince won the esteem of people throughout all the three worlds, for he was patient as the earth, wise as Bṛhaspati, and mighty as Indra, Śacī's lord. Rāma's virtues were prized by all the people, a source of joy to his father, and lent the prince himself such splendor as the sun derives from its shining beams. His conduct and invincible valor made him so like one of the world guardians that Earth herself desired to have him as her master.

[29–33] Now, as King Daśaratha, slayer of enemies, observed the many incomparable virtues of his son, he fell to thinking. In his heart he cherished this single joyous thought: "When shall I see my dear son consecrated? His one desire is that the world should prosper, he shows compassion to all

creatures, and is loved in the world even more than I, like a cloud laden with rain. He is as mighty as Yama or Śakra, wise as Bṛhaspati, steady as a mountain, and far richer in virtues than I. Oh that at my age I might go to heaven seeing my son holding sway over this entire land."

[34–37] Recognizing that his son was endowed with all these consummate virtues, the great king consulted with his advisers and chose him to be prince regent. The lord of the earth then convened the chief men of the land from the various cities and provinces in which they lived. The kings arrived and in the different places he assigned to them, they solemnly took their seats, facing the king. The lord of men paid his respects to the nobles and the men of the city and provinces, and, as they sat deferentially around him, he resembled Indra, the thousand-eyed lord, surrounded by the deathless gods.

Sarga 2

[1–7] King Daśaratha, lord of the earth, called the whole assembly to order, and, rumbling like a storm cloud, his loud voice deep and resonant as a war drum, he made this incomparable speech to their delight and benefit: "The whole world has long been under the protection of Ikṣvāku kings. It is my desire to ensure its well-being, for continued happiness is its due. I myself have always kept to the path my ancestors followed and watched over my subjects unremittingly, to the best of my ability. And in my striving for the benefit of the entire world, my body has grown old in the shade of the white parasol. I have lived a life of many countless years, and now I crave repose for this aged body of mine. I have grown weary bearing the burden of righteousness for the world. For it is heavy, one must have self-discipline to bear it and the royal powers it encompasses.

[8–12] "Therefore, with the approval of all you twice-born men assembled here, I seek respite by entrusting my subjects' welfare to the care of my son. My eldest son was born resembling me in every virtue. He is a conqueror of enemy fortresses, as powerful as Indra, smasher of citadels. It is my pleasure to invest Rāma, champion of righteousness and bull among men, with the office of prince regent, a union as propitious as the moon's with the constellation Puṣya. The majestic eldest brother of Lakṣmaṇa will be a fit and proper master for you. Indeed, the three worlds all together

would find a superior master in him. Once I have ensured the well-being of this land by entrusting it to this son of mine, I shall be free from care."

[13–17] When the king had spoken in this fashion, the nobles rejoiced at his words like peacocks at the rumble of a rain-laden cloud. They fully recognized that the aim of their aged king, Daśaratha, was embraced in the wisdom of righteousness and statecraft, and when they had reflected upon it, they replied: "You are old, your majesty, and have lived many countless years. You should consecrate Rāma as prince regent of the land." But when the king heard their reply, he pretended not to know it was their heart's desire, and in order to test them he asked: "How can it be that, while I am ruling the land in righteousness, you want to see my son become prince regent?"

[18–22] In concert with the men of the city and provinces the nobles answered great Daśaratha: "Your majesty, the virtues of your son are many and excellent. They are divine virtues, which make valiant Rāma the equal of Śakra and elevate him far above all other Ikṣvākus, lord of the people. All the world knows Rāma to be a decent man, for truth and righteousness are his first concern. And he is wise in the ways of righteousness, true to his word, a man of character, and never spiteful. He is forbearing, conciliatory, kind spoken, grateful, and self-disciplined. He is gentle, firm of purpose, ever capable, and unspiteful. Rāghava speaks kindly to all people, and yet he always tells the truth. He shows reverence for aged and deeply learned brahmans.

[23–27] "Because of this, his fame among us is without equal and his glory and power have steadily grown. He is proficient in the use of all the weapons of the gods, *asuras*, and men. Whenever he goes forth with Saumitri to battle in defense of a village or city, he always returns triumphant. And when returning from battle on chariot or elephant, Rāma always stops to ask the men of the city after their welfare as if they were his kinsmen—about their sons, sacred fires, and wives as well as their hosts of servants, and students, without omission and in due order, just as a father might ask his own flesh-and-blood sons, asking them: 'Do your students obey you? Are they prompt in their tasks?' This is how Rāma, tiger among men, always questions us.

[28–34] "When misfortune strikes anyone, Rāma feels the sorrow keenly, and he takes the pleasure a father might in all the people's

celebrations. He is a great archer, a man who tells the truth, who seeks the counsel of the aged and is master of his senses. How fortunate you are to be blessed with a son like your Rāghava, who, like Mārīca Kaśyapa, has every virtue a son should have. The people of the kingdom and in this the foremost of cities wish the celebrated Rāma strength, health, and long life—all the people of the city and the provinces, outsiders as well as intimates. And at dawn and at dusk women young and old alike devoutly worship all the gods for glorious Rāma's sake. By your grace, O lord, let what they pray for come to pass. Grant, great king, that we may see Rāma become prince regent, your son who is dark as the blue lotus and deadly to his every enemy. O lord, your godlike son is committed to the good of all the world, and so for our good, granter of boons, please consecrate the exalted prince joyfully and without delay."

Sarga 3

[1–7] All around him they held out their hands, cupped like lotuses in reverence, and the king acknowledged them, adding these kind and beneficial words: "Ah, how overjoyed I am. You have magnified my grandeur beyond all measure that you should want my beloved eldest son to become prince regent." When the king had paid the brahmans this honor in return, he addressed Vasiṣṭha and Vāmadeva as the others stood listening: "This is the majestic and auspicious month of Caitra, when the woods are in full bloom. Let all the preparations be made for Rāma's installation as prince regent." "It shall be done just as you command," the two bulls among twice-born brahmans replied with joy and delight as they approached the lord of the world. Then the splendid king said to Sumantra: "Please bring Rāma, my accomplished son, here at once." Sumantra assented with the words "So be it" and, by order of the king, went in his chariot to fetch Rāma, best of chariot-warriors.

[8–13] Meanwhile, the kings who were seated there—the eastern, northern, western, and southern kings, *āryan* and barbarian, and others who lived in the forest and mountain regions—all paid homage to King Daśaratha, as the gods do to Vāsava. From the terrace of the palace where he stood in their midst like Vāsava among the Maruts, the royal seer watched his son approaching in his chariot. Rāma was the very image of the king of *gandharvas*, and renowned throughout the world for his manliness

as well. His arms were long, his strength immense, and he carried himself like a bull elephant in rut. He was extremely handsome and his face had the lovely glow of moonlight. With his beauty and nobility he ravished both the sight and the hearts of men. He was like the rain that refreshes people parched by summer's heat, and the lord of men could not get enough of gazing at him as he drew near.

[14–16] Sumantra helped Rāghava down from his splendid chariot and followed at the rear, his hands cupped in reverence, as Rāma made his way into his father's presence. Accompanied by the charioteer, Rāghava, bull among men, went to see his father, ascending to the rooftop terrace as lofty as Mount Kailāsa's peak. With his hands cupped in reverence, Rāma came before his father. He prostrated himself and, announcing his name, did obeisance at his father's feet.

[17–20] Gazing at his dear son bowed down beside him with his hands cupped in reverence, the king drew him up by his clasped hands and embraced him. The majestic king then directed Rāma to the throne made ready for him, a splendid one brilliantly set with gems and gold. As Rāghava sat down, the throne seemed to glow more brightly still from the prince's own luster, like Mount Meru when the bright sun rises. As the autumnal sky, for all its bright planets and constellations, is illuminated still further by the moon, so was the assembly hall lit up by the radiance Rāma shed.

[21–28] Daśaratha observed his dear son with keen satisfaction. It was as if he were looking in a mirror and seeing an enhanced reflection of himself. The king, and most blessed of fathers, turned to his son with a smile and, in words Kaśyapa might once have used with Indra, lord of the gods, he said: "Rāma, my dear son, you were born of my eldest wife—a worthy son of a worthy woman—and you are most virtuous. Moreover, since through your virtues you have won the loyalty of these my subjects, you shall become prince regent on the day of the lunar mansion Puṣya's conjunction. You are by nature disciplined and virtuous, as much as one could desire. But still, in spite of these virtues, I shall give you some beneficial advice, my son, because of my affection for you. Impose even stricter discipline on yourself, exercise constant self-control, and avoid all the vices that spring from desire and anger. Actively concern yourself with both overt and covert activities, to retain the loyalty of all your subjects, from the ministers down. He who

protects the earth while keeping the people content and loyal will give his allies cause to rejoice as did the immortal gods when they obtained nectar. So restrain yourself, my son, and behave in this fashion.”

[29–32] When Rāma’s loving friends heard this speech, they quickly hurried off to inform Kausalyā. That excellent lady directed that gold and cows and an assortment of precious objects be given to those who brought the news. Rāghava, meanwhile, after doing obeisance to the king, mounted the chariot and started back to his splendid dwelling amid the acclaim of the multitude. When the townsfolk heard the king’s announcement, it was as if they had secured some longed-for object, and, on taking leave of the lord of men, they went home and worshiped the gods in deep delight.

Sarga 4

[1–4] Once the townsfolk had gone, the king held further consultation with his counselors. When he learned what they had determined, the lord declared with determination: “Tomorrow is the day of the Puṣya asterism, so tomorrow my son Rāma, his eyes as coppery as lotuses, shall be consecrated as prince regent.” Retiring then to his private chamber, King Daśaratha instructed his charioteer Sumantra to fetch Rāma once again. Upon receiving his orders the charioteer set out at once for Rāma’s abode to fetch him.

[5–7] The guards informed Rāma that Sumantra had returned, and as soon as he learned of his arrival he felt uneasy. Rāma had him shown in at once, saying: “Tell me the reason for your returning, omitting nothing.” The charioteer replied: “The king wishes to see you. Such is the message, but you of course must be the judge of whether to go or not.”

[8–10] Such were the charioteer’s words, and, upon hearing them, Rāma hastily went to the palace to see the lord of men once more. When King Daśaratha heard that Rāma had arrived, he had him shown into his chamber, anxious to pass on the wonderful news. As majestic Rāghava entered the residence he caught sight of his father, and, at a distance, prostrated himself, cupping his hands in reverence.

[11–16] Rāma bowed low until the protector of the earth bade him rise and embraced him. Then, directing him to a splendid seat, the king once again addressed him: “Rāma, I am old, my life has been long. I have enjoyed all the pleasures I desired. I have performed hundreds of sacrifices

rich in food, with lavish priestly stipends. The child I desired—and you are he—was born to me, a son who has no peer on earth today, the very best of men. I have given alms, offered sacrifices, and studied the scriptures. I have experienced every pleasure, everything I wanted—and thus, my mighty son, I have discharged all my debts, to the gods, the seers, my ancestors, the brahmans, and to myself. There is nothing further required of me except your consecration. Therefore, you must do for me what I am about to tell you. All my subjects today expressed their wish to have you for their king, and so, my dear son, I will consecrate you as prince regent.

[17–20] "But there is more, Rāma. I have had dreams lately, inauspicious, ominous dreams. Great meteors and lightning bolts have been falling here out of a clear sky with a terrible crash. The astrologers also have informed me, Rāma, that my birth star is obstructed by hostile planets, Mars, Rāhu, and the sun. When such portents as these appear, it usually means a king is about to die or meet with some dreadful misfortune. You must therefore have yourself consecrated, Rāghava, before my resolve fails me. For the minds of men are changeable.

[21–27] "Today the moon has reached Punarvasu, just to the east of Puṣya; tomorrow, the astrologers predict, its conjunction with Puṣya is certain. On this very Puṣya day you must have yourself consecrated—I feel a sense of great urgency. Tomorrow, slayer of enemies, I will consecrate you as prince regent. Therefore, today you and your wife must take a vow to remain chaste this night, to fast and sleep upon a bed of *darbha* grass. Have your friends guard you warily today at every turn, for there are many impediments to affairs of this sort. And I believe the best time for your consecration is precisely while Bharata is absent from the city. Granted, your brother keeps to the ways of the virtuous, defers to his elder brother, and is righteous, compassionate, and self-disciplined. Nonetheless, Rāghava, it is my firm belief that the mind of man is inconstant, even the mind of a good man constant in righteousness. Even such a man is best presented with an accomplished fact."

[28–33] Once he had been informed that his consecration was set for the next day, Rāma was given leave to go, and, after doing obeisance to his father, he went to his dwelling. In keeping with the king's instructions regarding the consecration, he entered his house but then left immediately and went to his mother's apartments. There in the shrine-room he saw her,

clothed in linen, solemnly and silently praying for his royal fortune. Sumitrā and Lakṣmaṇa had already come, and Sītā had been sent for as soon as they heard the news of Rāma's consecration. At that moment, Kausalyā stood with her eyes closed, while Sumitrā, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa were seated behind her. From the moment she had received word that her son was to be consecrated as prince regent on the day of the Puṣya asterism, she had been controlling her breathing and meditating on the Primal Being, Janārdana.

[34–37] As she was engaged in these observances, Rāma approached her and did obeisance. Then, to her delight, he said: "Mother, my father has appointed me to the task of protecting the people. On Father's instructions my consecration will take place tomorrow. And as Father, with his sacrificial priests and preceptors, directs, Sītā and I both are to fast tonight. Please see to it that any auspicious rites appropriate for my consecration tomorrow are performed today on behalf of Vaidehī and me."

[38–41] Upon hearing Rāma say what she had so long desired, Kausalyā replied to Rāma in words choked with tears of joy: "Rāma, my child, may you live long. May all who block your way be vanquished. And when you are invested with sovereignty, may you bring joy to my kinsmen and Sumitrā's. Truly, it was under an auspicious constellation that I bore you, my dear son, since by your virtues you have won the favor of your father, Daśaratha. Truly, the vows of self-denial I made to the lotus-eyed Primal Being were not in vain, since the royal fortune of the Ikṣvākus will pass to you, my son."

[42–45] When Rāma had been addressed in this fashion by his mother, he spoke, smiling slightly, to his brother, who sat humbly by with his hands cupped in reverence: "Lakṣmaṇa, you must rule this land together with me. Royal sovereignty falls to your share too, for you are my second self. You too shall enjoy every pleasure you desire, Saumitri, and all the fruits of kingship. For it is for the sake of you alone, my second self, that I desire kingship and even life itself." When he had addressed Lakṣmaṇa in this fashion, he paid obeisance to his mothers and, bidding Sītā to take leave of them, he returned home.

Sarga 5

[1–6] When the lord of men had given Rāma his instructions regarding the consecration on the following day, he summoned his *purohita* Vasiṣṭha and

said: “Go, ascetic, and assist Kākutstha and his wife in undertaking a fast today, so that my son, a man strict in his vows, may gain majesty, glory, and kingship.” “So be it,” said the holy Vasiṣṭha, greatest of vedic scholars, in reply to the king, and he went himself to Rāma’s residence. Upon reaching Rāma’s dwelling, which resembled a bank of white clouds, the great sage entered and drove through the three courtyards in his chariot. In a flurry of excitement, Rāma hurried from his house to show veneration to the venerable seer who had arrived. Hurrying to the side of the wise man’s chariot and lending him support, he helped him to climb down.

[7–11] The *purohita*, noting Rāma’s deference, addressed him with compliments, and then, to the delight of the prince, who was deserving of every kindness, he said: “Your father is well disposed toward you, Rāma; you shall become prince regent. Today you and Sītā must fast. For, tomorrow morning, the lord of men, your father, Daśaratha, will consecrate you as prince regent with all the joy Nahuṣa felt in consecrating Yayāti.” When the sage had addressed Rāma, so strict in his vows, in this fashion, he then instructed both him and Vaidehī with the appropriate vedic verses in the conduct of their fast. Then, when he had been duly honored by Rāma, the king’s *guru* took leave of Kākutstha and left his residence.

[12–16] Rāma remained a while sitting there in the company of his affable friends. Then, with their best wishes, he took leave of them all and went inside. Delight filled the throngs of men and women in Rāma’s house so that for the moment it resembled a pond of blooming lotuses where cheerful birds are flocking. As Vasiṣṭha emerged from Rāma’s princely residence, he saw the highway filled with people. Curious onlookers, crowd upon crowd of them, were jamming every inch of the royal highways in Ayodhyā. Like waves, the crowds dashed together, and the royal highway sent up a roar of delight, like the sound the ocean makes.

[17–24] The city was being decked with fresh wildflower garlands, banners run up high above the houses, the thoroughfares swept and sprinkled. All the people who lived in Ayodhyā—women, children, and the aged alike—were eagerly waiting for sunrise and Rāma’s consecration. They were anxious to witness Ayodhyā’s greatest festival, a source of joy to the people, and an occasion for their adornment. The royal highway was so jammed that the *purohita* seemed to part a flood of people as he slowly made his way back to the palace. He ascended to the rooftop terrace, which

resembled a mountain peak wreathed in white clouds, and then rejoined the lord of men as Bṛhaspati might rejoin Śakra. Seeing he had come, the king left his throne and questioned him, and Vasiṣṭha informed him that his mission had been carried out. Given leave then by his *guru*, the king dismissed the multitudes of people and withdrew into his private chamber, like a lion into a mountain cave. His palace, rivaling great Indra's palace, was crowded with womenfolk in rich attire, and as the king entered, he shed over it as brilliant a light as the hare-marked moon sheds over the sky with its crowds of stars.

Sarga 6

[1–4] When the *purohita* had gone, Rāma bathed, and then, restraining his desire, he worshiped Nārāyaṇa in the company of his large-eyed wife. With bowed head he held out the oblation vessel. Then, in accordance with the ritual precepts, he offered the clarified butter in a blazing fire to the great divinity. He consumed the remains of the oblation and earnestly made his wish. Meditating on the god Nārāyaṇa, maintaining silence and restraining his desire, the prince lay down to sleep with Vaidehī on a thick-spread bed of *kuśa* grass in the majestic sanctuary of Viṣṇu.

[5–8] With one watch of the night remaining, he awoke and saw to the decorating of the entire house. This done, and hearing the pleasant voices of the bards, genealogists, and panegyrists, he began to intone his prayers in deep concentration, performing the morning *sandhyā* rites. Dressed in spotless linen, his head bowed low, he glorified Viṣṇu, crusher of Madhu, and had the twice-born brahmans pronounce their blessings. The deep sweet sound of their benedictions was echoed by the sound of musical instruments and filled all of Ayodhyā.

[9–14] All the people who lived in Ayodhyā were elated to hear that Rāghava and Vaidehī had undertaken their fast. [b]All the people of the town had heard about Rāma's consecration, and so, when they saw night brighten into dawn, they began to adorn the city. On sanctuaries that resembled mountain peaks wreathed in white clouds, at crossroads and thoroughfares, on shrines and watchtowers, on the shops of merchants rich in their many kinds of wares, on the majestic, rich dwellings of householders, on all the assembly halls, and on prominent trees, colorful banners and pennants were run up high. There were troupes of actors and dancers, there were minstrels

singing, and their voices could be heard everywhere, so pleasing to the ear and heart.

[15–19ab] [c]In public squares and private houses people spoke with one another in praise of Rāma, now that his consecration was at hand. [d]Even children playing in groups at their front doors talked together in praise of Rāma. The townsfolk beautified the royal highway too for Rāma's consecration, placing offerings of flowers there and perfuming it with fragrant incense. And anticipating that night would fall, they set up lantern-trees for illumination everywhere along the thoroughfares. Thus, the residents decorated their city.

[19cd–24] Afterward, eagerly waiting for Rāma's consecration as prince regent, they grouped together in public squares and in assembly halls. And there, in conversation with one another, they sang the praises of the lord of the people, saying: "Ah, what a great man our king, the delight of the House of the Ikṣvākus, is to recognize that he is old and to be ready to consecrate Rāma as king. What a blessing to us all that for a long time to come Rāma will be the lord of the earth and our protector. For Rāghava can tell good people from bad, he is wise and righteous and not arrogant. He loves his brothers and shows us the same affection he shows to them. Long live the righteous king, blameless Daśaratha, by whose grace we shall witness the consecration of Rāma!"

[25–28] As the townsfolk conversed in this fashion, the people of the provinces listened; for they too had come from every quarter when they got word of the event. The people of the provinces had come to the city from every quarter to witness Rāma's consecration, and they filled his city to overflowing. And as the waves of people rolled in, one could hear a sound like that of the sea when its swell is raised on a full-moon night. The city, resembling Indra's residence, grew so noisy and congested everywhere with spectators arriving from the provinces that it looked like the ocean waters teeming with all the creatures of the deep.

Sarga 7

[1–5] Now, Kaikeyī's family servant woman, who had lived with her from the time of her birth, had happened to ascend to the rooftop terrace that shone like the moon. From the terrace Mantharā could see all of Ayodhyā—the newly sprinkled royal highway, the lotuses and water lilies strewn

about, the costly ornamental pennants and banners, the sprinkling of sandalwood water, and the crowds of freshly bathed people. Seeing a nursemaid standing nearby, Mantharā asked: “Why is Rāma’s mother so delighted and giving away money to people, when she has always been so miserly? Tell me, why are the people displaying such boundless delight? Has something happened to delight the lord of the earth? What is he planning to do?”

[6–8] Bursting with delight and out of sheer gladness, the nursemaid told the hunchback Mantharā about the greater majesty in store for Rāghava: “Tomorrow, the day of the Puṣya asterism, King Daśaratha will consecrate as prince regent Rāma Rāghava, the blameless prince who has mastered his anger.” When she heard what the nursemaid said, the hunchback was furious and descended at once from the terrace that was like the peak of Mount Kailāsa.

[9–13] Consumed with rage, the malevolent Mantharā approached Kaikeyī as she lay upon her couch, and said: “Get up, you foolish woman! How can you lie there when danger is threatening you? Don’t you realize that a flood of misery is about to overwhelm you? Your beautiful face has lost its charm. You boast of the power of your beauty, but it has proved to be as fleeting as a river’s current in the hot season.” Addressed in this fashion, Kaikeyī was deeply distraught at the bitter words of the angry, malevolent hunchback. “Mantharā,” she replied, “is something wrong? I can tell by the distress in your face how sorely troubled you are.”

[14–18] But when the wrathful Mantharā heard Kaikeyī’s gentle words, she, clever speaker that she was, began to speak. The hunchback grew even more distraught and, with Kaikeyī’s best interests at heart, spoke out, trying to sharpen her distress and turn her against Rāghava: “Something very bad is going on, my lady, something that threatens to ruin you. For King Daśaratha is going to consecrate Rāma as prince regent. I felt myself sinking down into unfathomable danger, stricken with grief and sorrow, burning as if on fire. And so I have come here, with your best interests at heart. For when you are sorrowful, Kaikeyī, I am too, even more so, and when you prosper, so do I. There is not the slightest doubt of this.

[19–26] “You were born into a family of kings, you are a queen of the lord of the earth. My lady, how can you fail to know that the ways of kings are ruthless? Your husband talks of righteousness, but he is deceiving you;

his words are gentle, but he is cruel. You are too innocent to understand, and so he has utterly defrauded you like this. When it is expedient to do so, your husband reassures you, but it is all worthless. But now that there is something of real worth he is ready to bestow it upon Kausalyā. Having gotten Bharata out of the way by sending him off to your family, the wicked man is going to establish Rāma in unchallenged kingship tomorrow. He is an enemy pretending to be your husband. He is like a viper, child, whom you have taken to your bosom and lovingly mothered. For what an enemy or a serpent would do if one ignored them, King Daśaratha is now doing to you and your son. The man is evil, his assurances false, and, by establishing Rāma in the kingship, you dear child who has always known comfort, he will bring ruin upon you and your family. Kaikeyī, the time has come to act for your own good, and you must do so swiftly. You must save your son, yourself, and me, my enchanting beauty."

[27–30] When she had heard Mantharā's speech, the lovely woman rose from the couch and presented the hunchback with a lovely piece of jewelry. And when she had given the hunchback the jewelry, Kaikeyī, most beautiful of women, said in delight to Mantharā: "What you have told me is the most wonderful news. How else may I reward you, Mantharā, for reporting such good news to me? For I draw no distinction between Rāma and Bharata, and so I am perfectly content that the king should consecrate Rāma as king. You could not possibly tell me better news than this, nor speak more welcome words, my well-deserving woman. For what you have told me I will give you yet another boon, something you might like even more—just choose it!"

Sarga 8

[1–5] [e]But Mantharā was beside herself with rage and sorrow. She threw the jewelry away and said spitefully: "You foolish woman, how can you be delighted at such a moment? Are you not aware that you stand in the midst of a sea of grief? It is Kausalyā who is fortunate; it is her son the eminent twice-born brahmans will consecrate as the powerful prince regent tomorrow, the day of the Puṣya asterism. Once Kausalyā secures this great object of joy, she will cheerfully eliminate her enemies. And, like a servant, you will have to wait on her with your hands cupped in reverence. Delight

is truly in store for Rāma's exalted women, and all that is in store for your daughters-in-law is misery at Bharata's downfall."

[6–10] Seeing how deeply distressed Mantharā was as she spoke, Queen Kaikeyī began to extol Rāma's virtues: "Rāma knows what is right, his *gurus* have taught him self-restraint. He is grateful, truthful, and honest, and as the king's eldest son, he deserves to be prince regent. He will protect his brothers and his dependents like a father; and long may he live! How can you be upset, hunchback, at learning of Rāma's consecration? Surely Bharata as well, the bull among men, will obtain the kingship of his fathers and forefathers after Rāma's one hundred years. Why should you be upset, Mantharā, when we have prospered in the past, and prosper now, and shall have good fortune in the future? For he obeys me even more scrupulously than he does Kausalyā."

[11–13] But when Mantharā heard what Kaikeyī said, she was yet more sorely troubled. She heaved a long and hot sigh and then replied: "You are too simpleminded to see what is good for you and what is not. You are not aware that you are sinking in a vast ocean of misery fraught with disaster and grief. Rāghava will be king, Kaikeyī, and then the son of Rāghava, while Bharata will be utterly excluded from the royal succession.

[14–19] "For not all the sons of a king stand in line for the kingship, my lovely. Were all of them to be so placed, grave misfortune would ensue. That is why kings place the powers of kingship in the hands of the eldest, faultless Kaikeyī, no matter how virtuous the others may be. Like a man without a protector, your son, the object of your maternal affection, will be cast out from the royal succession and from its pleasures as well. Here I am, come on your behalf, but you pay me no heed. Instead, you want to reward me in token of your rival's good luck! Surely once Rāma secures unchallenged kingship he will have Bharata sent off to some other country—if not to the other world! And yet you sent Bharata, a mere boy, away to your brother's, while proximity breeds affection even among insentient creatures.

[20–27] "Now, Rāghava will protect Lakṣmaṇa, just as Saumitri will protect Rāma, for their brotherly love is as celebrated among the people as that of the Aśvins. And so Rāma will do no harm to Lakṣmaṇa, but he will—undoubtedly—to Bharata. So let your son go straight from Rājagṛha to the forest. That is the course I favor, and it is very much in your own best

interests. For in this way good fortune may still befall your side of the family—if, that is, Bharata secures, as he rightfully should, the kingship of his forefathers. Your child has known only comfort, but he is Rāma's natural enemy. How could the one, with his fortunes lost, live under the sway of the other, whose fortunes are thriving? Like the leader of an elephant herd attacked by a lion in the forest, your son is about to be overwhelmed by Rāma. You must save him! Then, too, because of your beauty's power, you used to spurn your co-wife, Rāma's mother, so proudly. How could she fail to repay that enmity? When Rāma secures control of the land, Bharata will surely be destroyed. You must therefore devise some way of making your son the king and banishing his enemy this very day."

Sarga 9

[1–7] When Kaikeyī had been addressed in this fashion by Mantharā, whose face was glowing with rage, she heaved a long, hot sigh and replied to her: "Today, at once, I will have Rāma banished to the forest, and, at the same time, have Bharata consecrated as prince regent. But now, Mantharā, you must envision some means through which Bharata, and not Rāma, may secure the kingship." Addressed thus by Queen Kaikeyī, the malevolent Mantharā answered her, to the ruin of Rāma's fortunes: "Look here, Kaikeyī—and pay close attention—I shall tell you how your son Bharata may secure exclusive kingship." Upon hearing Mantharā's words, Kaikeyī half rose from her sumptuously spread couch and cried: "Tell me a plan, Mantharā, through which Bharata, and not Rāma, may secure the kingship."

[8–11] Addressed by the queen in this fashion, the malevolent hunchback answered her, to the ruin of Rāma's fortunes: "Once, during a battle between the gods and *asuras*, your husband went with the royal seers to lend assistance to the king of the gods, and he took you along. He set off toward the south, Kaikeyī, to the Daṇḍakas and the city called Vaijayanta. It was there that the great *asura* of a hundred powers of illusion Timidhvaja ruled, the same one who is called Śambara. He had given battle to Śakra, and even the host of gods could not defeat him.

[12–15] "During that great battle, King Daśaratha was struck unconscious, but you, my lady, conveyed him out of battle. But there, too, your husband was wounded by weapons, and once again you saved him, my lovely. And so, in his gratitude, he granted you two boons. Then, my lady,

you said to your husband, ‘I shall choose my two boons when I want them,’ and the great king consented. I myself was unaware of this, my lady, until you yourself told me a long time ago. You must now demand these two boons of your husband: the consecration of Bharata and the banishment of Rāma for fourteen years.

[16–21] “Now, you must enter into the chamber where you go when you are angry, daughter of Aśvapati, as if in a fit of rage. Put on a dirty garment, lie down on the bare ground, and do not speak to or even look at him. You have undoubtedly always been your husband’s favorite. For your sake the great king would even enter fire, the eater of oblations. The king cannot bring himself to anger you, nor even bear to look at you when you are angry. He would even give up his own life to please you. The lord of the earth is powerless to refuse your demands. Foolish girl, recognize the power of your beauty. King Daśaratha will offer gems, pearls, gold, a whole array of precious gifts—but pay no mind to them. Just keep reminding Daśaratha of those two boons he granted at the battle of the gods and *asuras*. Illustrious lady, you must not let this opportunity pass you by.

[22–26] “Then, when the great king Rāghava helps you up himself and offers you a boon, you must ask him for this one, first making sure he swears to it: ‘Banish Rāma to the forest for nine years and five, and make Bharata the king and bull among kings.’ In this way, Rāma, once banished, will become the disfavored prince, and your Bharata, his rival eliminated, will be king. And by the time Rāma returns from the forest, your steadfast son and his supporters will have struck deep roots and won over the populace. I think it high time you overcame your timidity. You must forcibly prevent the king from carrying out Rāma’s consecration.”

[27–33] And so Mantharā induced her to accept such evil by disguising it as good, and Kaikeyī, now cheered and delighted, replied: “Hunchback, I never recognized your excellence, nor how excellent is your advice. Of all the hunchbacks in the world you are foremost in devising plans. You are the only one who has always sought my advantage and had my interests at heart. I might never have known, hunchback, what the king intended to do. There are hunchbacks who are misshapen, crooked, and hideously ugly—but not you, you are lovely, you are bent no more than a lotus in the breeze. [f]Your chest is arched, raised as high as your shoulders, and down below, your waist, with its lovely navel, seems as if it had grown thin in envy of it.

Your girdle-belt beautifies your hips and sets them jingling. Your legs are set strong under you, while your feet are long. With your broad thighs, Mantharā, and your garment of white linen, you are as resplendent as a *rājahaṃsa* when you stand before me.

[34–39] "And this huge hump of yours, wide as the hub of a chariot wheel—your clever ideas must be stored in it, your political wisdom and powers of illusion. And it is there, hunchback, where I will drape you with a garland made of gold, once Bharata is consecrated and Rāghava has gone to the forest. When I have accomplished my purpose, my lovely, when I am satisfied, I will anoint your hump with precious liquid gold. And for your face, hunchback, I will have them fashion an elaborate and beautiful forehead mark of gold and exquisite jewelry for you. Dressed in a pair of lovely garments, you shall go about like a goddess; with that face of yours that challenges the moon, peerless in visage; and you shall strut holding your head high before the people who hate me. You too, hunchback, shall have hunchbacks of your own, adorned with every sort of ornament, to humbly serve you, just as you always serve me."

[40–41] As she was being flattered in this fashion, the hunchback replied to Kaikeyī, who still lay on her splendid couch like a flame of fire on an altar: "One does not build a dike, my dear lady, after the water is gone. Get up, apprise the king, and secure your own welfare!"

[42–47] Thus incited, the large-eyed queen, puffed up with the intoxicating power of her beauty, went with Mantharā to the chamber she used when she was angered. There the lovely lady removed her pearl necklace, worth many hundred thousands, and the rest of her costly and beautiful jewelry. And then, under the spell of the hunchback Mantharā's words, the golden Kaikeyī lay down upon the floor and said to her: "Hunchback, go inform the king that I will surely die right here unless Bharata receives as his portion the earth and Rāghava, as his, the forest." And uttering these ruthless words, the lady put all her jewelry aside and lay down upon the ground bare of any spread, like a *kinnara* woman fallen from the heavens. Her face darkened in her swollen rage, her fine garlands and ornaments stripped off, the wife of the lord of men grew distraught and took on the appearance of a sky shrouded in darkness, when all the stars have set.

Sarga 10

[1–4] Now, when the great and powerful king had given his orders for Rāghava's consecration, he gladly entered the inner apartments to tell his wife, so worthy of his love, the good news. But when the lord of the world saw her fallen on the ground and lying there in a posture so ill befitting her, he was consumed with sorrow. The guileless old man saw her on the floor, that guileful young wife of his, who meant more to him than life itself. He began to caress her affectionately, as a great bull elephant in the wilderness might caress his cow wounded by the poisoned arrow of a hunter lurking in the forest.

[5–12] And as he caressed his lotus-eyed wife with his hands, sick with worry and desire, he said to her: "I do not understand, my lady, why you should be angry. Has someone offended you, or shown you disrespect, that you should lie here in the dust, my precious, and cause me such sorrow? What reason have you to lie upon the floor as if possessed by a malignant spirit, driving me to distraction, when you are so precious to me? I have skilled physicians, who have been gratified in every way. They will make you well again. Tell me what hurts, my lovely. Is there someone to whom you would have favor shown, or has someone aroused your disfavor? Who shall find immediate favor? Who shall incur my lasting disfavour? Is there some guilty man who should be freed, or some innocent man I should put to death? What poor man should I enrich? What rich man shall I impoverish? I and all of my people bow to your will. I could not bring myself to thwart any wish of yours, not if it cost me my life. Tell me what your heart desires, for all the earth belongs to me, as far as the wheel of my power extends."

[13–15] When he had thus addressed her, she was encouraged and resolved to tell her hateful plan. She then commenced to cause her husband still greater pain: "No one has mistreated me, your majesty, or shown me any disrespect. But there is one wish I have that I should like you to fulfill. But first, you must give me your promise that you are willing to do it. Then I shall reveal what it is I desire."

[16–20] The mighty king, hopelessly under the woman's power, being addressed in this way by his beloved Kaikeyī, replied to her with some surprise: "Do you not yet know, proud lady, that except for Rāma, that tiger among men, there is not a single person I love as much as you? Take hold of my heart, rip it out, and examine it closely, my lovely Kaikeyī; then tell

me if you do not find it true. Seeing that I have the power, you ought not to doubt me. I will do what will make you happy, I swear to you by all my acquired merit."

[21–24] His words filled her with delight, and she voiced her dreadful wish, which was like a visitation of Yama, the ender of all things: "Let the three and thirty gods, with Indra at their head, hear how you in due order swear an oath and grant me a boon. Let the sun and moon, the sky, the planets, night and day, the quarters of space, heaven and earth, let all the *gandharvas* and *rākṣasas*, the spirits that roam the night, the household gods in every house, and all the other malignant spirits take heed of what you have said. This mighty king, who is true to his word and knows the ways of righteousness, in full awareness grants me a boon—let the deities give ear to this for me."

[25–29] Thus did the queen ensnare the great archer and called upon witnesses. She then addressed the king, who, infatuated with desire, had granted her a boon: "I will now claim the two boons you once granted me, my lord. Hear my words, lord of the earth: Let my son, Bharata, be consecrated with the very rite of consecration that you have prepared for Rāghava. Let Rāma withdraw to the Daṇḍaka forest and for nine years and five live the life of an ascetic, wearing hides, barkcloth garments, and matted hair. Let Bharata become the uncontested prince regent this very day, and let me see Rāghava depart today for the forest."

[30–31] When the great king heard Kaikeyī's ruthless demands, he was shaken and unnerved, like a stag at the sight of a tigress. The lord of men gasped as he sank down upon the bare floor. "Oh damn you!" he cried in uncontrollable fury before he fell into a stupor, his heart crushed by grief.

[32–37] Gradually the king regained his senses and then, in bitter sorrow and anger, he spoke to Kaikeyī, burning her up, as it seemed, with his gaze: "Malicious, wicked woman, bent on destroying this House! Evil woman, what evil did Rāma or I ever do to you? Rāghava has always treated you just like his own mother. What reason can you have for trying to wreck his fortunes, of all people? It was sheer suicide to bring you into my home. I did it unwittingly, thinking you a princess—and not a deadly venomous serpent. When praise for Rāma's virtues is on the lips of every living soul, what crime could I adduce as pretext for renouncing my favorite son? I

would sooner renounce Kausalyā, Sumitrā, sovereignty, or even life itself, than Rāma, who so cherishes his father.

[38–41] "The greatest joy I know is seeing my firstborn son. If I cannot see Rāma, I shall lose my mind. The world might endure without the sun, or crops, without water, but without Rāma life could not endure within my body. Enough of this! Give up this scheme, you evil-scheming woman. Have mercy! Must I get down and bow my head to your feet?" His heart in the grip of a woman who knew no bounds, the guardian of the earth began to lament like a man with no protector, and, as the queen extended her feet, he tried in vain to touch them, and collapsed like a man sick to death.

Sarga 11

[1–6] The king lay there, in so unaccustomed a posture, so ill befitting his dignity, like Yayāti himself, his merit exhausted, fallen from the world of the gods. But the woman was unafraid, for all the fear she awoke. She was misfortune incarnate and had yet to secure her fortunes. Once more she tried to force him to fulfill the boon. "[g]You are vaunted, great king, as a man true to his word and firm in his vows. How then can you be prepared to withhold my boon?" When Kaikeyī had spoken to him in this way, King Daśaratha, faltering for a moment, angrily replied: "Vile woman, mortal enemy! Will you not be happy, will you not be satisfied until you see me dead and Rāma, the bull among men, gone to the forest? To satisfy Kaikeyī, Rāma must be banished to the forest, but if I keep my word in this, then I must be guilty of another lie. My infamy will be unequaled in the eyes of the people and my disgrace inevitable."

[7–10] While he was lamenting in this fashion, his mind in a whirl, the sun set and evening came on. To the anguished king lost in lamentation, the night, adorned with the circlet of the moon, no longer seemed to last a mere three watches. Heaving burning sighs, aged King Daśaratha sorrowfully lamented in his anguish, his eyes fixed upon the sky: "I do not want you to bring the dawn—here, I cup my hands in supplication. But no, pass as quickly as you can, so that I no longer have to see this heartless, malicious Kaikeyī, the cause of this great calamity."

[11–13] But even as he spoke in this fashion, the king cupped his hands before Kaikeyī and once more, begging her mercy, he spoke: "[h]Please, I am an old man, my life is nearly over. I am desolate, I place myself in your

hands. Dear lady, have mercy on me for, after all, I am king. Truly it was thoughtless of me, my fair-hipped lady, to have said those things just now. Have mercy on me, please, my child. I know you have a heart."

[14–15] Although the pure-hearted king lamented, frantically and piteously, his eyes reddened and dimmed by tears, the malicious, black-hearted woman merely listened and made no reply. And as the king stared at the woman he loved but could not appease, whose demand for the exile of his own son was so perverse, he once again fell unconscious to the ground, overcome with grief.

Sarga 12

[1–7] The evil woman watched as Daśaratha Aikṣvāka lay writhing unconscious on the ground where he had fallen, tortured with grief for his son. Then she spoke: "How can you collapse like this and lie there on the ground, as though you deemed it a sin to fulfill the promise you made me? You must stand by your obligation. For people who understand the meaning of righteousness hold truth to be its essence. Now, I am simply appealing to truth and exhorting you to do what is right. Śaibya, the lord of the world, once promised his very own body to a falcon, and he actually gave it to the bird, your majesty, thereby attaining the highest goal. The same was true of mighty Alarka. When a brahman versed in the *vedas* begged him for his eyes, he plucked them out and gave them unflinchingly. [i]The ocean, lord of rivers, respects the truth, keeping his narrow limits, and in accordance with the truth does not transgress the shore he pledged to keep. If you do not make good this pledge to me, my noble husband, then right before your eyes I will abandon my life, as you have abandoned me."

[8–11] Thus did the shameless Kaikeyī press the king, and he could no more free himself from her snare than Bali could from Indra's. His heart began to beat wildly, his face was drained of color, he was like an ox struggling between the yoke and wheels. His eyes so clouded he could hardly see, barely steadying himself by an act of will, the lord of the earth said to Kaikeyī: "Once, I took and held your hand, sanctified by vedic *mantras*, in mine before the marriage fire. I now repudiate you, evil woman, as well as the son I fathered on you."

[12–16] Stupefied with rage, the wicked Kaikeyī again addressed the king in the harshest words at her command: "What are these venomous and

cutting words you are speaking? Just have your son Rāma brought here without delay. Not until you have placed my son on the throne, sent Rāma to live in the forest, and rid me of all my rivals, will you have met your obligations.” Subjected to this constant prodding, like a noble horse prodded by a sharp goad, the king finally said: “I am bound by the bond of righteousness. My mind is failing me! I want to see righteous Rāma, my beloved eldest son.”

[17–21ab] When Kaikeyī heard the king’s words, she immediately said to the charioteer on her own initiative: “Go! Bring Rāma.” Then the righteous and majestic king, utterly joyless on account of his son, looked up at the charioteer through eyes red with grief and tried to speak to him. Hearing the pitiful sound and seeing the king’s desolate expression, Sumantra cupped his hands in reverence and withdrew some steps from his presence. When in his desolation the lord of the earth proved incapable of speaking, Kaikeyī, who well knew her counsels, addressed Sumantra herself: “Sumantra, I will see Rāma. Bring the handsome prince at once.”

[21cd–24] Thinking this meant all was well, he rejoiced with all his heart. [j]For as she pressed him to hurry, Sumantra reflected, “Clearly the righteous king has exhausted himself in preparing Rāma’s consecration.” With this in mind, the mighty charioteer thought, and he departed in great delight, eager to see Rāghava. As he rushed out, he noticed first the lords of the earth at the door and then saw various wealthy townsfolk assembling, taking their positions before the door.

Sarga 13

[1–3] When they had passed the night, the brahmans, who were masters of the *vedas*, together with the king’s *purohitas*, assembled at the assembly hall. The ministers, the leaders of the army, and the leading merchants joyfully convened for Rāghava’s consecration. And once the bright sun had risen and Puṣya day had come, the chief twice-born brahmans began the preparations for Rāma’s consecration.

[4–10] They set out golden ewers, a richly ornamented throne, a chariot draped with a resplendent tiger skin; water brought from the holy confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā, and from all the other holy wells, pools, and lakes, from rivers flowing east, west, north, and south, and from all the oceans. And they also set out honey, curds, clarified butter, parched

grain, *darbha* grass, flowers, and milk; golden and silver pots of grain decked with sap-rich twigs, and pots brimming with pure water and adorned with lotuses and water lilies. A splendid yak-tail fly whisk stood ready for Rāma. It was inlaid with jewels, white and softly radiant as moonbeams. And a white parasol, majestic and luminous as the orb of the moon, was set up in readiness for Rāma's consecration. Standing ready were a white bull, a flawless white horse, and a majestic rutting royal elephant.

[11–14] There were eight maidens to ensure good fortune, all adorned with jewelry; all sorts of musical instruments, panegyrists, and others. Bringing with them the different sorts of princely equipment required for a royal consecration of the Ikṣvākus, they all convened there by order of the king. But the lord of the earth was nowhere to be seen and so they asked: "Who will inform the king of our arrival? The sun, maker of day, has risen and wise Rāma's consecration as prince regent is ready to begin, but we do not see the king."

[15–22] As they were speaking, Sumantra, the honored attendant of the king, said to all those lords of the earth who had come from all over the world: "[k]I can easily go and inquire, as my lords direct, why the king has not come out if he is now awake." Having said this, the master of ancient tales went to the door of the inner apartments, and there he proclaimed his blessings and sang the praises of Rāghava's virtues, telling him: "Holy night is past, gracious day has begun. Awaken, tiger among kings, and attend forthwith to your duties. The brahmans, the leaders of the army, and the merchants have come, your majesty. They await your presence. Awaken, Rāghava." While Sumantra, the charioteer and skilled counselor, was singing his praises, the king became aware of him and said: "I am not asleep. Bring Rāghava here at once." So King Daśaratha spoke, again ordering the charioteer. Hearing the king's command and bowing his head to him, he left the king's chamber, thinking there to be some good news.

[23–28] As the charioteer entered onto the royal highway bedecked with banners and pennants, he could hear the people talking about Rāma. Sumantra then spied the lovely residence of Rāma, resplendent as Mount Kailāsa or the residence of Śakra. It was closed fast with massive gates, and adorned with a hundred terraces. There were golden images atop its pinnacles and a gateway fashioned of gems and coral. It resembled a bank of autumnal clouds, radiant as a cave on Mount Meru, and was adorned

with enormous wreaths of choice garlands. The charioteer proceeded on his horse-drawn chariot, observing the crowds that filled the great and opulent royal palace, and, when he reached it, a shiver of delight passed through him. It resembled a mountain peak or a motionless cloud, with a complex of buildings more splendid than towering mansions, and the charioteer made his way through it unchecked, like a dolphin through the gem-stocked sea.

Sarga 14

[1–9] The master of ancient tales passed through the door of the inner apartments where crowds of people thronged and reached the courtyard. It was nearly empty except for the young men who stood guard, armed with bows and arrows and wearing polished earrings, wary, alert, and unswervingly loyal. He saw the aged guardians of the women stationed at the door. They were dressed in saffron-colored robes and richly ornamented, and they stood watchfully, holding their staffs. At the sight of him approaching they at once informed Rāma and his wife, eager to announce to them the good news. On receiving the message, Rāghava at once had them usher in the charioteer, his father's confidant, for he was anxious for the good news. The charioteer saw the slayer of enemies seated on a richly covered golden couch. He looked like Vaiśravaṇa, the lord of wealth, in all his jewelry and with the precious sandalwood paste he had applied, red as a boar's blood, pure and fragrant. Sītā was beside him—like the star Citrā beside the hare-marked moon—standing at his side with a yak-tail fly whisk in her hand. He blazed like the sun with his natural radiance, and the charioteer greeted him, the granter of boons, with the deference in which he was practiced.

[10–17] His hands cupped in reverence, Sumantra, the honored attendant of the king, asked the prince if he had passed the time agreeably, and slept and rested well. Then he said to him: "O lord, most excellent son of Kausalyā, your father and Queen Kaikeyī wish to see you. Please go there without delay." Addressed in this fashion, the splendid lion among men was delighted. He dutifully assented and then said to Sītā: "My lady, the king and queen must surely have met and taken some counsel on my behalf relating to the consecration. The lady is agreeable and desires to please. [1]Having divined his intention, she must be urging the king in my favor, my lovely-eyed wife. A council's mood will be reflected in the messenger it

sends. Surely the king is going to consecrate me as prince regent this very day. Very well then, I will go off at once and see the lord of the earth. Remain here comfortably seated with your companions, and rejoice." Dark-eyed Sītā, esteemed by her lord, followed her husband as far as the door, uttering prayers for good fortune.

[18–22] When he saw the crowds of eager people, he approached and greeted them. Then he mounted his splendid chariot that glowed like fire, the purifier. With the luster of its gleaming gold, it nearly blinded the onlookers, while harnessed to it were splendid horses almost the size of young elephants. Just as thousand-eyed Indra boards his swift chariot with its team of bay steeds, Rāghava boarded and sped away, ablaze with royal splendor. Raising a clamor like a storm cloud rumbling in the sky, he emerged majestically from his residence like the moon from a massive cloud. And Rāma's younger brother Lakṣmaṇa, with a parasol and flywhisk in his hands, boarded the chariot at the rear, standing guard over his brother.

[23–27] As Rāma was departing, a wild cheering broke out from the flood of people all around. Rāghava could hear the comments of the crowd gathered there and the different things the people of the city were saying about him in their deep delight: "There goes Rāghava now, on his way to wide sovereignty by the grace of the king. All our wishes have come true, now that we shall have him as our ruler. What a great gain for our people, that at long last this whole kingdom will pass into his hands." Like Vaiśravaṇa he proceeded on his way, while master musicians sounded his praises, and eulogists, bards, and genealogists extolled him as they rode along, their horses neighing and elephants trumpeting. The lovely thoroughfare then came into Rāma's view, with its teeming elephants, chariots, and horses, with the great floods of people overflowing the squares and with its profusion of precious objects and stocks of many wares.

Sarga 15

[1–3] Mounted in his chariot in the midst of his delighted supporters, majestic Rāma beheld the city crowded with people of every description. Rāma proceeded down the center of the royal highway. The splendid thoroughfare was fragrant with aloewood and adorned with white, cloudlike houses—gleaming and spacious, flanked with all kinds of wares and foodstuffs of every kind.

[4–8] And as he made his way, he honored every man, each according to his rank, and heard the many blessings spoken by his supporters: “May you, after your consecration, embark upon and keep to the path traveled by your grandfathers and great-grandfathers. Once Rāma is king, we shall live in even greater happiness than when his father cared for us and his grandfathers in times past. What need have we now of earthly pleasure, what need of heavenly bliss? Would only that we might see Rāma return installed in the kingship. There is nothing more welcome to us than this, that Rāma, a man of immeasurable power, be consecrated as our king.”

[9–11] Such and others like them were the heartfelt comments of his supporters, and, however laudatory, Rāma listened impassively as he proceeded along the thoroughfare. And there was not a man among them able to tear his eyes or thoughts away from Rāghava, best of men, even when he had left them far behind. Righteous Rāma showed compassion to the people of all four social classes in a way befitting their ages, and so they were all devoted to him.

[12–14] On reaching the palace that resembled great Indra’s abode, the prince, ablaze with royal splendor, entered his father’s residence. Passing through all the courtyards and turning back all his people, the son of Daśaratha came to the private inner apartments. When the prince had gone into his father’s presence, all the people were delighted, and they awaited his return as the ocean, lord of rivers, awaits the rising of the moon.

Sarga 16

[1–7] Rāma then spied his father, with a wretched look and his mouth gone dry, slumped upon his lovely couch, Kaikeyī at his side. First he made an obeisance with all deference at his father’s feet and then did homage most scrupulously at the feet of Kaikeyī. “Rāma!” cried the wretched king, his eyes brimming with tears, but he was unable to say anything more or even look at him. As if his foot had grazed a snake, Rāma was seized with terror to see the expression on the king’s face, one more terrifying than he had ever seen before. For the great king lay heaving sighs, racked with grief and remorse, all his senses numb with anguish, his mind stunned and confused. It was as if the imperturbable, wave-wreathed ocean had suddenly been shaken with perturbation, as if the sun had been eclipsed, or a seer had told a lie. His father’s grief was incomprehensible to him, and the more he

pondered it, the more his agitation grew, like that of the ocean on the full-moon day.

[8–10] With his father's welfare at heart, Rāma struggled to comprehend: "Why does the king not greet me, today of all days? On other occasions, when Father might be angry, the sight of me would calm him. Why then, when he looked at me just now, did he instead become so troubled? He seems desolate and grief-stricken, and his face has lost its glow." Then, after first doing obeisance to Kaikeyī, Rāma spoke these words to her:

[11–14] "I hope that I have not unknowingly committed some offense to anger my father? Tell me, and make him forgive me. His face is drained of color, he is desolate and does not speak to me. I hope that no physical illness or mental distress afflicts him? But it is true, well-being is not something one can always keep. Some misfortune has not befallen the handsome prince Bharata, has it, or courageous Śatrughna, or one of my mothers? I should not wish to live an instant if his majesty, the great king, my father, were angered by my failure to satisfy him or do his bidding.

[15–19] "How could a man not treat him as a deity incarnate, in whom he must recognize the very source of his existence in this world? I trust that in anger you did not presume to use harsh words with my father, and so throw his mind into such turmoil? Answer my questions truthfully, my queen: what has happened to cause this unprecedented change in the lord of men? At the bidding of the king, if enjoined by him, my *guru*, father, king, and benefactor, I would hurl myself into the purifying fire, drink deadly poison, or drown myself in the sea. Tell me then, my lady, what the king would have me do. I will do it, I promise. Rāma never takes back his word."

[20–26] The ignoble Kaikeyī then addressed these ruthless words to Rāma, the upright and truthful prince: "Long ago, Rāghava, in the war of the gods and *asuras*, your father bestowed two boons on me, for protecting him when he was wounded in a great battle. By means of these I have demanded of the king that Bharata be consecrated and that you, Rāghava, be sent at once to the Daṇḍaka forest. If you wish to ensure that your father be true to his word, and you to your own, best of men, then listen to what I have to say. [m]You must abide by your father's command, exactly as he promised it, and enter the forest for nine years and five. You must forgo the consecration and withdraw to the Daṇḍaka forest, live there seven years and

seven, wearing matted hair and barkcloth garments. Let Bharata rule this land from the city of the Kosalans, with all the treasures it contains, all its horses, chariots, elephants."

[27–31] When Rāma, slayer of enemies, heard Kaikeyī's hateful words, like death itself, he was not the least disconcerted, but only replied: "So be it. I shall go away to live in the forest, wearing matted hair and barkcloth garments, to safeguard the promise of the king. But I want to know why the lord of the earth, the invincible tamer of his foes, does not greet me as he used to. You need not worry, my lady. I say it to your face: I shall go to the forest—rest assured—wearing barkcloth and matted hair. Enjoined by my father, my benefactor, *guru*, and king, a man who knows what is right to do, what would I hesitate to do in order to please him?

[32–37] "But there is still one thing troubling my mind and eating away at my heart: that the king does not tell me himself that Bharata is to be consecrated. For I would gladly give up my wealth, the kingship, Sītā, and my own dear life to my brother Bharata on my own, without any urging. How much more so when urged by my father himself, the lord of men, in order to fulfill your fond desire and safeguard his promise? So you must reassure him. Why should the lord of the earth keep his eyes fixed upon the ground and fitfully shed these tears? This very day, let messengers depart on swift horses by order of the king to fetch Bharata from his uncle's house. As for me, I shall leave here in all haste for the Daṇḍaka forest, without questioning my father's word, to live there fourteen years."

[38–43] Kaikeyī was delighted to hear these words of Rāma's, and trusting them implicitly, she pressed Rāghava to set out at once, adding: "So be it. Men shall go as messengers on swift horses to bring home Bharata from his uncle's house. But since you are now so eager, Rāma, I do not think it wise to linger. You should therefore proceed directly from here to the forest. That the king is ashamed and does not address you himself, that is nothing, best of men, you needn't worry about that. But so long as you have not hastened from the city and gone to the forest, Rāma, your father shall neither bathe nor eat." "Oh damn you!" the king gasped, overwhelmed with grief, and he fell back in a faint on the gilt couch.

[44–48] Rāma raised up the king, pressed though he was by Kaikeyī—like a horse whipped with a crop—to make haste and depart for the forest. Listening to the ignoble Kaikeyī's hateful words, so dreadful in their

consequences, Rāma remained unperturbed and only said to her: “My lady, it is not in the hopes of gain that I suffer living in this world. You should know that, like the seers, I have but one concern and that is righteousness. Whatever I can do to please this honored man I will do at any cost, even if it means giving up my life. For there is no greater act of righteousness than this: obedience to one’s father and doing as he bids.

[49–52] “Even unbidden by this honored man, at your bidding alone I shall live for fourteen years in the desolate forest. Indeed, Kaikeyī, you must ascribe no virtue to me at all if you had to appeal to the king, when you yourself are so venerable in my eyes. Let me only take leave of my mother and settle matters with Sītā. Then I shall go, this very day, to the vast forest of the Daṇḍakas. You must see to it that Bharata obeys Father and guards the kingdom, for that is the eternal way of righteousness.”

[53–56] When his father heard Rāma’s words, he was stricken with such deep sorrow that he could not hold back his sobs in his grief and broke out in loud weeping. Splendid Rāma did homage at the feet of his unconscious father and at the feet of that ignoble woman, Kaikeyī; then he turned to leave. Reverently Rāma circled his father and Kaikeyī, and, withdrawing from the inner apartments, he saw his group of friends. Lakṣmaṇa, the delight of Sumitrā, fell in behind him, his eyes brimming with tears, in a towering rage.

[57–61] [n]Reverently circling the equipment for the consecration, but careful not to gaze at it, Rāma slowly went away. The loss of the kingship diminished his great majesty as little as night diminishes the loveliness of the cool-rayed moon, beloved of the world. Though he was on the point of leaving his native land and going to the forest, he was no more discomposed than one who has passed beyond all things of this world. Holding back his sorrow within his mind, keeping his every sense in check, and fully self-possessed, he made his way to his mother’s residence to tell her the sad news. As Rāma entered her residence, where joy still reigned supreme, as he reflected on the sudden ruin of all his fortunes, even then he showed no sign of discomposure, for fear it might endanger the lives of those he loved.

Sarga 17

[1–5] Sorely troubled, heaving sighs like an elephant, but controlling his emotions, Rāma went with his brother to his mother's inner apartments. He observed the venerable elder seated there at the door of the house and many other people standing about. Passing through the first courtyard, he saw the brahmans in the second, old men expert in the *vedas* and held in honor by the king. Rāma bowed to the old men and passed into the third courtyard, where he saw women old and young vigilantly standing guard at the door. In delight the women congratulated him and then rushed into the house to pass on the good news to Rāma's mother.

[6–12] Queen Kausalyā had spent the night in meditation, and now in the early morning was worshiping Viṣṇu to secure the welfare of her son. Dressed in linen, intent upon her vow and with deep delight, she was then pouring an oblation into the fire in accordance with the vedic verses and pronouncing benedictions. As he entered her lovely private apartments, Rāma saw his mother as she was pouring the oblation into the fire. When she saw that her son, his mother's one joy, had finally come, she approached him in delight, as a mare might her colt. In her deep maternal affection for her son, the invincible Rāghava, Kausalyā addressed him with these kind and beneficial words: "May you attain the life span of the great and aged royal seers who keep to the ways of righteousness. May you attain their fame and the righteousness that benefits a ruling House. See, Rāghava, your father is as good as his word. This very day, the righteous king will consecrate you as prince regent."

[13–16] Slightly extending his hands cupped in reverence, Rāghava bowed low out of natural courtesy and profound respect. Then he said to his mother: "My lady, I see you do not know of the great danger at hand. It will bring sadness to you, Vaidehī, and Lakṣmaṇa. For fourteen years I must dwell in the desolate forest, living on honey, fruit, and roots, giving up meat like a sage. The great king is awarding Bharata the office of prince regent and banishing me to the Daṇḍaka forest and a life of asceticism."

[17–19] A sorrow such as she had never known swept over her, and Rāma saw his mother fall down in a faint, like a broken plantain tree. He came to her side and helped her up. Then, as she stood there in her desolation like a mare forced to draw a heavy load, he brushed away the dust that covered her every limb with his hand. Tortured by unhappiness

such as she had never known before, she spoke to Rāghava, tiger among men, as he attended on her, while Lakṣmaṇa stood by, listening:

[20–23] “Rāghava, my son, had you never been born to bring me such grief, had I been childless, I would have been spared any further sorrow. A barren woman’s grief is only of the mind and only a single grief—the painful thought, ‘I have no child’; she never comes to feel another, my son. But the joy and comfort I had not found to be within my husband’s power to give me, Rāma, I cherished hopes I perhaps might find in a son. How their words will break my heart, the many painful words I shall hear from my junior co-wives, being their senior as I am. And what could bring a woman greater sorrow?

[24–28] “Even with you present this is how I am spurned. How much more so will it be once you are gone, my child? Surely nothing is left me but death. For anyone who used to serve me or respect my wishes will look anxiously toward Kaikeyī’s son without so much as a word for me. The ten years and seven since you were born, Rāghava, I have passed yearning to put an end to my sorrow. It was so difficult to raise you in my wretched state, and it was all in vain, the meditation and the fasts, and all the pains I took. How hard this heart of mine must be that it does not crumble, as the bank of a great river crumbles in the rains when the fresh waters wash over it.

[29–33] “It must be that I can never die, or that no room is left for me in the house of Yama, if even now Yama, the ender of all things, will not carry me off, as brutally as a lion carries off a whimpering doe. My heart must be made of iron since it does not split and shatter upon the ground, and my body too, under this crushing sorrow. How true it is that people cannot die before their fated hour. What a sorrowful thing that my vows, my gifts of alms, and acts of self-denial have all been to no avail, that the austerities I practiced for my child’s sake have proved to be as barren as seed sown in a desert. For if a person broken by heavy sorrow could die before his fated hour, of his own free will, then left without you as I am, like a cow without her calf, I would go this very instant to the congregation of the dead.” [o]As she gazed upon Rāghava and contemplated the great calamity to come, her unhappiness was too much for her to bear, and she broke out in copious lamentation, as a cow will do at the sight of her calf being bound and dragged away.

Sarga 18

[1–5] Lakṣmaṇa grew desolate while Rāma's mother, Kausalyā, lamented in this fashion. Then he addressed her in words appropriate to the moment: "I do not approve of this either, my lady, that Rāghava should abdicate the majesty of kingship and go off to the forest, bowing to the demands of a woman. The king is perverse, old, and debauched by pleasures. What would he not say under pressure, mad with passion as he is? I know of no crime on Rāghava's part nor any fault that could justify his banishment from the kingdom to a life in the forest. I do not know of a single man in this world, not an adversary, nor even an outcast, who would assert such a fault, even behind our backs.

[6–11] "Who that has any regard for what is right could renounce, without any provocation, a son so godlike, upright, and self-restrained, one who cherishes even his enemies? What son, mindful of the conduct of kings, would take to heart the words of a king who has become a child again? Before anyone learns of this matter, let me help you seize control of the government. With me at your side, bow in hand to protect you, who could prevail against you, Rāghava, when you take your stand like Kṛtānta, the god of death, himself? With my sharp arrows, bull among men, I will empty Ayodhyā of men if it stands in opposition. I will slaughter everyone who sides with Bharata or champions his cause. Leniency always ends in defeat.

[12–15] "Now that the king has provoked our implacable enmity, yours and mine, chastiser of foes, what power can he summon to bestow sovereignty on Bharata? Truly, my lady, the loyalty I feel to my brother is heartfelt. I swear it to you by my truth and my bow, by my gifts of alms and sacrifices. Should Rāma enter the forest, or a blazing fire, my lady, rest assured that I will have entered first. I shall drive your sorrow away with my valor just as the rising sun drives away the darkness. Let the queen witness my power! Let Rāghava witness it!"

[16–21] When Kausalyā heard great Lakṣmaṇa's words, weeping and sick with grief, she said to Rāma: "My son, you have heard your brother Lakṣmaṇa speak. Whatever is best to do next you must do, as you see fit. But you must not, heeding the unrighteous words spoken by my co-wife, go away and leave me stricken with grief. You know what is right, and if you would do it, my most righteous son, obey me. Remain here and do your

supreme duty. Kāśyapa obeyed his mother, my son, and lived a life of self-discipline at home. In this way, he acquired ultimate ascetic power and reached the highest heaven.

[22–24] "In no way am I less deserving than the king of the respect you owe a *guru*. I will not give you permission, you may not go away to the forest. Parted from you, what use have I for a life of comfort? Better for me to be with you and eat the grass of the fields. If you go to the forest leaving me sick with grief, I will fast to death right here, for I could not bear to go on living. And you will then be guilty of a crime held in infamy in the world, like the ocean, lord of rivers, who through unrighteous conduct incurred the sin of *brahmahatyā*, the killing of a brahman."

[25–31] Then, in a manner consistent with righteousness, righteous Rāma addressed his desolate mother, Kausalyā, as she was lamenting in this fashion: "It is not within my power to disobey my father's words. I bow my head to you in supplication; for I wish to go to the forest. Even the wise seer Kaṇḍu, a man strict in his observances, killed a cow at the bidding of his father, for he knew that it was right. And even in our own family, long ago, the sons of Sagara at their father's command dug up the earth and thereby met with wholesale slaughter. Rāma Jāmadagnya, acting on his father's bidding, took an axe and by his own hand butchered his mother, Reṇukā, in the forest. So you see, I am not the only one who acts on his father's commands. I am merely following the path sanctioned and taken by those men of old. It is this that is my duty on earth, and I cannot shirk it. Besides, no one who does his father's bidding ever comes to grief."

[32–36] After he had spoken to his mother in this fashion, he turned to Lakṣmaṇa and said: "I well know, Lakṣmaṇa, the profound affection you bear me. But you fail to understand the real meaning of truth and self-restraint. Righteousness is paramount in the world, and on righteousness is truth itself founded. This command of Father's is based on righteousness, and it is absolute. Having once heard a father's command, a mother's, or a brahman's, one must not disregard it, my mighty brother, if one would hold to what is right. I cannot disobey my father's injunction, mighty brother, and it is at Father's bidding that Kaikeyī has coerced me. So, give up this ignoble notion that is based on the code of the kshatriyas; be of like mind with me and base your actions on righteousness, not violence."

[37–40] Once Lakṣmaṇa's eldest brother had spoken to his brother out of affection, he once more addressed Kausalyā with his head bowed and his hands cupped in reverence: "Please, my lady, give me your permission as I am bound to leave here for the forest. By my very life I adjure you, bestow your blessings on my journey. Once I have fulfilled the promise, I will return to the city from the forest. For I cannot for the sake of mere kingship turn my back on glory, whose reward is great; nor, since life is so short, my lady, would I choose today this paltry land over all that is right." The bull among men thus earnestly pleaded with his mother—he wanted only to go to the Daṇḍakas—and firmly taught his younger brother the proper view of things. Then, in his heart, he reverently circled the woman who gave him birth.

Sarga 19

[1–5] Saumitri was shocked and desolate; this was all far more than he could bear. He heaved a sigh like a mighty serpent, and his eyes bulged with wrath. But Rāma steadfastly maintained his composure and in full self-possession he turned to his beloved friend and brother and spoke: "Saumitri, let this flurry in preparation of my consecration, let it all now be directed toward stopping it. You must take care that our mother Kaikeyī to whom my consecration was a source of such heartache, be anxious no more. Not for a moment, Saumitri, can I disregard the anxious sorrow that has sprung up in her heart.

[6–11] "I do not recall ever doing the slightest thing, intentionally or unintentionally, to displease my mothers or father. But let my father—a truthful man, true to his word, ever striving for truth—be freed from the fears he has of what other people might say. For if this rite were not called off, he too would suffer mental torment, to hear his truthfulness impugned, and his torment would then torment me. So call off the consecration ceremony, Lakṣmaṇa. [p]As soon as you have done so, I wish to leave here for the forest. By my immediate banishment the princess will achieve her goal and be able to consecrate her son, Bharata, without any hindrance. For only after I have gone into the wilderness, dressed in barkcloth garments and hides, wearing a crown of matted hair, will Kaikeyī find peace of mind.

[12–16] "Since my mind is made up and my heart is set on it, I should not cause further pain. I shall go into banishment without delay. It is

nothing but destiny, Saumitri, that we must see at work in my exile and in the revocation of the kingship, which had been awarded to me. Otherwise, why should Kaikeyī be so determined to harm me were this intention of hers not fated and ordained by destiny? You know yourself, dear brother, that never in the past have I drawn any distinction among our mothers, nor did she ever differentiate between her son and me. I cannot credit anything but fate for those words of hers, those hard and brutal words that meant the revocation of the consecration and my exile.

[17–22] "How could she, a princess, so good-natured and virtuous, speak to my harm in the presence of her husband, like some common woman? What cannot be explained must surely be fate, which clearly no creature can resist; for how complete has been the reversal that has befallen her and me. [q]What man has the power to contest his fate, Saumitri, when one cannot even perceive it except from its effects? [r]Happiness and sadness, fear and anger, gain and loss, birth and death—all things such as these must surely be the effects of fate. I have no regret even though my consecration has been thwarted, and neither must you. Comply with my wishes and at once put a stop to the rite of consecration. It is not our younger mother Kaikeyī, Lakṣmaṇa, who should be blamed for preventing my becoming king. People overmastered by fate say things they never wanted to. You must know that fate has such power."

Sarga 20

[1–4] While Rāma was speaking in this way, Lakṣmaṇa kept his head lowered the whole time and listened with his mind poised, it seemed, midway between joy and sorrow. But then that bull among men knit a frown between his brows and heaved a sigh like a great serpent seized with anger in its lair. His frowning face was terrible to see—it looked like the face of a raging lion. He shook his hand as an elephant shakes its trunk, from side to side, up and down, and let his head fall on his chest.

[5–9] [s]Looking askance at his brother, from the corner of his eye, he said: "Now is not the time for panic, the source of this sheer folly. Could a man like you talk this way were he not panicked, fearful of losing people's respect because of some infraction of righteousness? You are a bull among kshatriyas, as powerful as fate is powerless. How in the world can you blame fate, a contemptible, feeble thing? How is it you harbor no suspicion

of those two evil people? Don’t you know, my righteous brother, that there are cunning people who wear the guise of righteousness? A thing the whole world would find despicable is under way as someone other than you is to be consecrated. I despise that ‘righteousness,’ my king, which has so altered your thinking, and about which you are deluded.

[10–12] “Even if you think it fate that framed this plot of theirs, still you must reject it. I cannot approve of this course at all. For it is only the weak and cowardly who submit to fate; heroic men, strong of heart, do not humble themselves before fate. A man who is able to counter fate with manly effort does not give up for all that fate may frustrate his purposes.

[13–19] “No! Today the people will see the power of fate and the power of man. Today the disparity between the two will be clearly revealed. Today they will see fate averted by my manly power, just as they saw your royal consecration blocked by fate. By my manly power I will turn back fate that is running wild, like a careering elephant beyond control of the goad, in a frenzy of rut and might. Not all the world guardians, Rāma, nor the entire three worlds—much less our father—can prevent your consecration today. Those who conspired to banish you to the wilderness, your majesty, will themselves be exiled to the wilderness for fourteen years. I shall crush Father’s and that woman’s hopes of making her son the king by blocking your consecration. The power of fate in aid of one fallen within my mighty grasp will be no match for my terrible power and the sorrow it will wreak.

[20–23] “Later on, many years from now, my brother, when your sons in turn are protecting the subjects, then you can go to live in the forest. For, according to the ways of the royal seers of old, living in the forest is prescribed only after entrusting one’s subjects to one’s sons, to protect as though they were their very own sons. If, perhaps, you are unwilling to assume the kingship without the king’s wholehearted support, righteous Rāma, for fear of a revolt against your kingship, I swear to you, my heroic brother: may I never come to share in the afterworld of heroes if I do not guard the kingship for you as the shore guards the ocean.

[24–29] “Have yourself consecrated with the holy implements; busy yourself with that. I shall be able all on my own to repulse any kings by force. These two arms are not merely for the sake of beauty, nor is this bow merely for adornment; this sword is not for the sake of ornament nor are these arrows just for filling a quiver. All four things exist for subduing my

enemies, and I am not very eager that anyone be thought my match. With my sword held ready, its blade sharp and lustrous as flashing lightning, I count no one my match, be he Indra himself, wielder of the *vajra*. Soon the earth will be impassable, knee-deep in the trunks, flanks, and heads of elephants, horses, and men hacked off by the strokes of my sword. Like clouds with lightning playing about them, like mountains engulfed in flames, elephants will drop to the ground today under the blows of my sword.

[30–36] "When I stand before them with my bow held ready, with my armguards and finger guards strapped on, how could any of those men fancy himself a man? Shooting now one man with many, now many men with one, I will ply my arrows in the vitals of men, horses, and elephants. This very day the power of my all-powerful weapons shall prevail to strip the king of his power and make it over to you, my lord. This very day these arms of mine, well suited for wearing sandalwood paste, sporting bracelets, lavishing wealth, and protecting friends as well, will do their job, Rāma, repulsing those who stand in the way of your consecration. Just tell me, which of your enemies should I separate this very day from his fame, his loved ones, and his life? Just instruct me what to do to bring the land under your control. I am your servant." Wiping Lakṣmaṇa's tears away and comforting him all the while, the heir of the Rāghava dynasty said: "You must understand, dear brother, that I am resolved to obey my father's command, for such is the way of the virtuous."

Sarga 21

[1–6] Once Kausalyā saw that Rāma was resolved to follow his father's orders, she spoke to him, her most righteous son, her words choked with tears: "How will he who has never known sorrow, who is righteous and speaks kindly to all creatures, how will the son I bore to Daśaratha live by gleaning grain? When his servants and slaves are eating delicacies, how can the master eat fruit and roots in the forest? Who would believe it, who would not be seized with terror, to hear that virtuous Rāghava, the king's beloved, is being exiled? If you leave me here, a raging fire of grief, unlike any other, will consume me as the many-colored flames of fire consume a thicket when winter is past. How would a cow not follow her calf if it wanders off? I must follow you, my son, wherever you may go."

[7–10] When he heard what his mother had said in her deep sorrow, Rāma, bull among men, addressed her with these words: “Deceived by Kaikeyī, and with me withdrawn to the wilderness, the king will surely not survive if you too should desert him. For a woman to desert her husband is wickedness pure and simple. You must not do so despicable a thing, not even think it. As long as my father and lord of the world, Kākutstha, lives, he must be shown obedience, for that is the eternal way of righteousness.”

[11–16] Thus addressed by Rāma, Kausalyā recognized what was proper. “[t]So be it,” she replied, though without joy, to tireless Rāma. At this, Rāma, champion of righteousness, once more addressed his mother in her deep sorrow: “Both you and I must do as Father bids. He is king, husband, foremost *guru*, lord, and master of us all. Once I have passed these nine years and five in the great wilderness, I shall stand again at your bidding, with the deepest joy.” Addressed in this fashion, Kausalyā, in deep agony, her face flooded with tears, responded: “Rāma, I cannot bear to remain among my co-wives. Take me too, Kākutstha, to the wilderness like a wild doe if, out of regard for your father, your heart is set on going.”

[17–23] As she was weeping in this way, Rāma wept too, and said: “As long as she lives, a woman’s one deity and master is her husband. And today the king, our master, is exercising his mastery over you and me. Bharata is righteous too, and speaks kindly to all creatures. He will respect your wishes, for he has always been earnest in doing what is right. Once I have departed, you must take care to ensure that the king does not trouble himself in the least with grief for his son. Even the most excellent of women, one who earnestly undertakes vows and fasts, will come to a bad end if she does not respect her husband’s wishes. A woman must show her husband obedience and earnestly strive to please and benefit him. Such is the way of righteousness discovered long ago, revealed in the *veda*, and handed down in the world. And for my sake you must likewise reverence the brahmans, who are true to their vows, my lady. In this way, you will pass the time, awaiting my return. Your fondest wish will be fulfilled when I return, if the champion of righteousness should remain alive.”

[24–25] When Kausalyā had been addressed in this way by Rāma, tortured by grief for her son, her eyes dimmed by tears, she replied to him: “Go, my mighty son, and be very careful. May good fortune attend you always.” When the queen saw how determined Rāma was to live in the

forest, she made her prayers for him from the bottom of her heart and prepared to bestow her blessings on his journey.

Sarga 22

[1–6] [u]Rāma's mother restrained her anguish, and, having sipped some water so that she was once again pure and in better spirits, she began to utter her blessings for him: "May the *sādhyas* bless you and the Viśvedevas, the Maruts and the great seers. May Dhātṛ, the creator, and Vidhātṛ, the arranger, bless you, Pūṣan, Bhaga, and Aryaman too. May the years and seasons bless you always, the months and half-months, the nights and days and hours. May your learning, fortitude, and righteousness protect you everywhere, my son. May the blessed god Skanda, Soma, and Bṛhaspati protect you. [v]May the Seven Seers and Nārada guard you everywhere, my wise son, and so may all the constellations, and all the planets with their presiding deities, as you wander in a sage's garb through the great forest.

[7–11] "May you not be troubled by leaping monkeys or scorpions, by gnats or flies in the woods, or by snakes or insects in the jungle thickets. May the huge elephants not harm you, my dear son, nor the lions, tigers, bears, boars, or fierce, horned buffalo. May the other types of ferocious creatures that feed on human flesh not injure you, my son, for these fervid prayers I now offer them. May your way be safe, may your courage prevail, may all good things be plentiful, Rāma. Go with my blessings, dear son. May my blessings protect you hour by hour from all the things on earth, in the sky or in heaven that might beset your path. And may Brahmā, the sustainer of creatures and lord of all the worlds, the seers and the rest of the gods guard you while you are living in the forest."

[12–14] Thus did the glorious large-eyed woman worship the hosts of gods with garlands and incense and fitting hymns of praise, saying: "May you have the same good fortune as thousand-eyed Indra, to whom all gods bow, when he slew the demon Vṛtra. May you have the same good fortune Vinatā secured for Suparṇa when he went in quest of the nectar."

[15–20] Next, she made an amulet out of the auspicious herb of proven worth, the *viśalyakaraṇī*, healer of arrow wounds, and whispered vedic *mantras* over it. The illustrious woman had him bow his head, kissed him on the forehead, and embraced him, saying: "Go in happiness, Rāma my son, and may you achieve success. How happy I shall be to see you, my

child, back again in Ayodhyā, healthy, successful, and firmly established in the house of the king. I have worshiped the hosts of gods, Śiva and all the others, the great seers, the malignant spirits, great *asuras*, and serpents. When you have gone to the forest, Rāghava, may they, and every quarter of space, ever promote your welfare." And so, her eyes brimming with tears, she concluded her blessings for his journey, as custom required. Then she reverently circled Rāghava, took him in her arms, and pressed him to her bosom again and again. After the queen had reverently circled him, glorious Rāghava again and again pressed his head to his mother's feet. He then proceeded to Sītā's residence, ablaze with his own royal splendor.

Sarga 23

[1–6] After reverently paying obeisance to Kausalyā, Rāma, blessed by his mother, made ready to depart for the forest, keeping firmly to the path of righteousness. Along the royal highway crowded with men, the prince went, illuminating it and melting the hearts of the people, it seemed, with all his virtues. Poor Vaidehī had heard nothing of all this; she still believed in her heart that Rāma was to be consecrated as prince regent. She knew the rites for the gods and had performed them in deep delight. And knowing what royal regalia to expect, she waited for the prince. As Rāma entered his residence—still decorated and thronged with delighted people—he lowered his head a little, in shame. Sītā started up and began to tremble as she looked at her husband who was consumed with grief, his senses numb with anxious care.

[7–10] When she saw how his face was drained of color, how he sweated and chafed, she was consumed with sorrow. "What is the meaning of this, my lord?" she asked. "Today was surely the day for which the learned brahmans had forecast the conjunction of Puṣya, the majestic constellation ruled by Bṛhaspati. Why are you so downcast, Rāghava? The hundred-ribbed parasol with its hue of white-capped water is not throwing its shade upon your handsome face. Nor is your face, with eyes like the hundred-petaled lotus, being fanned by the pair of splendid flywhisks, the color of the moon or the *haṃsa*.

[11–17] "And I see no eloquent panegyrists, bull among men, singing your praises in delight, no bards or genealogists with their auspicious recitation. Nor have the brahmans, masters of the *vedas*, sprinkled your

head and poured honey and curds upon it, as custom requires. No one wishes to follow in your train, not the officials, nor the heads of guilds in their finery, nor the people of the city and provinces. How is it the splendid Puṣya chariot does not precede you, with its team of four swift horses with their trappings of gold? I see no sign of the royal elephant, revered for its auspicious marks and resembling a mountain black with clouds. It is not leading your procession, my mighty husband. Nor do I see your escort, my handsome and mighty husband, proceeding with the gold-wrought throne held before them. What can all this mean, when your consecration is already under way? Never before has your face had such a color, and I see no sign of delight."

[18–21] Such were her anxious words, and the delight of the Raghus replied to her: "Sītā, my honored father is banishing me to the forest. O Jānakī, you are the daughter of a great House, you know what is right and always practice it. Listen to the course of events that has brought this upon me. Once, long ago, when Kaikeyī had found favor with him, my father, King Daśaratha, a man true to his promise, granted her two great boons. Today, when my consecration was already under way at the instigation of the king, she pressed him for them. [w]Since he had made an agreement, he was compelled by righteousness.

[22–25] "For fourteen years I must live in the Daṇḍaka wilderness, while my father will appoint Bharata as prince regent. Therefore, I have come to see you before I leave for the desolate forest. You are never to boast of me in the presence of Bharata. Men in power cannot bear to hear others praised, and so you must never boast of my virtues in front of Bharata. You must not ever expect to receive any special treatment from him. Life with him will be possible only by constant acquiescence. I will safeguard my *guru*'s promise and leave this very day for the forest. Be strong, my sensible wife.

[26–29] "When I have gone to the forest where sages make their home, my precious, blameless wife, you must earnestly undertake vows and fasts. You must rise early and worship the gods according to custom and then pay homage to my father, Daśaratha, lord of men. And my aged mother, Kausalyā, who is tormented by misery, deserves your respect as well, for she has subordinated all to righteousness. The rest of my mothers too must always receive your homage. My mothers are all equal in my eyes for their love, affection, and care.

[30–34] “[x]And what is most important, you must look on Bharata and Śatrughna, respectively, as your brother and your son, for they are dearer to me than life itself. You must never show opposition to Bharata, for he is now both king of the country and master of our House. Kings show their favor when they are pleased with good conduct and sedulously attended to—and if they are not, they grow angry. Lords of men will repudiate their sons, their own flesh and blood, if they serve them ill, and will adopt even strangers, should they prove capable. My beloved, I am going to the great forest, and you must stay here. You must do as I tell you, my lovely, and not give offense to anyone.”

Sarga 24

[1–5] When she had been addressed in this fashion, Vaidehī, who always spoke kindly to her husband and deserved kindness from him, grew angry just because she loved him, and she said: “My lord, a man’s father, his mother, his brother, his son, and his daughter-in-law all experience the effects of their own past deeds, and each one suffers an individual fate. But only a wife, bull among men, must share her husband’s fate. Therefore I too have been ordered to live in the forest. It is not her father or mother, not her son or friends or herself, but her husband, and he alone, who gives a woman permanent refuge in this world and after death. So if you must leave this very day for the trackless forest, Rāghava, I will go in front of you, softening the thorns and sharp *kuśa* grass.

[6–9] “Cast out your anger and resentment, like so much water left after drinking one’s fill. Do not be reluctant to take me, my mighty husband. There is no evil in me. The shadow of a husband’s feet in any circumstances surpasses the finest mansions, flying palaces, or even flying through the sky. My mother and father instructed me in all these different questions. I do not have to be told now the proper way to behave. I shall live as happily in the forest as if it were my father’s house, caring for nothing in the three worlds but to be faithful to my husband.

[10–14] “I will obey you always and practice self-discipline and chastity. What pleasures I shall share with you, my mighty husband, in the honey-scented woods! O Rāma, bestower of honor, you have the power to protect any other person in the forest. Why then not me? You need not doubt that I can survive on nothing but fruit and roots; I shall not cause you any trouble

by living with you. I long to see the streams and mountains, the ponds and forests, and nowhere shall I be afraid with my wise husband to defend me. I want to see the lotus ponds in full bloom, blanketed with *haṃsas* and *kāraṇḍavas*, happy in your company, my mighty husband.

[15–19] "What pleasures I shall share with you, my large-eyed husband, what bliss for me to be with you like this, even were it to be for a hundred thousand years! If I were to be offered a place to live in heaven itself, Rāghava, tiger among men, I would refuse it if you were not there. [y]I will go to the trackless forest teeming with deer, monkeys, and elephants, and live there as if in my father's house, clinging to your feet alone, in strict self-discipline. I love no one else; my heart is so attached to you that were we to be parted I am resolved to die. Take me, oh please grant my request. I shall not be a burden to you." Yet, despite what Sītā said, the best of men, who so cherished righteousness, was still unwilling to take her, and in order to dissuade her, he began to describe how painful life in the forest is.

Sarga 25

[1–3] While Sītā was speaking in this manner, the righteous prince, who knew what was right and cherished it, attempted to dissuade her: "Sītā, you are the daughter of a great House and have always been earnest in doing what is right. You must stay here and do your duty, not what your heart desires. My frail Sītā, you must do as I say. There are so many hardships in the forest. Listen to me and I shall tell you.

[4–8] "Sītā, you must give up this notion of living in the forest. The name 'wilderness' is given only to the wild regions where hardships abound. It is, in fact, with your welfare at heart that I am saying this. The forest is never a place of pleasure—I know—but only of pain. There are lions that live in mountain caves; their roars redoubled by mountain torrents, are a painful thing to hear—the forest is a place of pain. At night, worn with fatigue, one must sleep on the ground on a bed of leaves, broken off of themselves—the forest is a place of utter pain. And one has to fast there, Maithilī, to the limit of one's endurance, wear clothes of barkcloth, and bear the burden of matted hair.

[9–15] "The wind is so intense there and the darkness too. One is always hungry, and the dangers are so great—the forest is a place of utter pain. There are many creeping creatures, of every size and shape, my lovely,

ranging aggressively over the ground—the forest is a place of utter pain. There are snakes too, that live in the rivers, moving as sinuously as rivers, and they are always there obstructing one's way—the forest is a place of utter pain. Moths, scorpions, worms, gnats, and flies continually harass one, my frail Sītā—the forest is wholly a place of pain. There are thorn trees, sharp *kuśa* and *kāśa* grasses, my lovely, and the forest is a tangle of their branches and blades—the forest is a place of utter pain. So no more of your going to the forest, you could not bear it. The more I think about it the more I see how many hardships the forest holds." When great Rāma had thus made up his mind not to take her to the forest, Sītā did not reply to him at once, but then in bitter sorrow she replied.

Sarga 26

[1–5] When Sītā heard what Rāma had said, she was overcome with sorrow. With tears trickling down her face, she answered him in a faint voice: "Do you not know that what you call the hardships of life in the forest would all be luxuries if your love accompanied them? By the order of our elders I must go with you, Rāma. I would die here and now if parted from you. But if I were by your side, Rāghava, not even Śakra, lord of the gods, could harm me for all his might. A woman whose husband has left her cannot go on living, regardless of what advice you give me, Rāma.

[6–10] "Besides, my wise husband, long ago in my father's house I heard the brahmans prophesy that someday I should have to live in the forest. The twice-born can read the signs on a person's body, my powerful husband, and from that moment at home, when I heard what they foretold, I have constantly yearned to live in the forest. The prediction that I should have to live in the forest must someday be fulfilled. And it is with you that I would go there, my love, not otherwise. I will go with you and carry out the prediction. The moment has arrived; let the prophecy of the twice-born brahman come true. I know that in living in the forest there is indeed much pain, my mighty husband, but it is only those who are unprepared that suffer from it.

[11–16] "When I was just a girl in my father's house, I happened to hear, in the presence of my mother, all about forest life from a holy mendicant woman. And, in fact, I have begged you many times before to let us go and live together in the forest, my lord, so much do I desire it. Please, Rāghava,

I have been waiting for the chance to go. I want nothing more than to serve my hero as he lives in the forest. If from feelings of love I follow you, my pure-hearted husband, I shall have no sin to answer for, because my husband is my deity. My union with you is sacred and shall last even beyond death. There is a holy scripture, my high-minded husband, which glorious brahmans recite: ‘When in this world, in accordance with their own customs and by means of the ritual waters, a woman’s father gives her to a man, she remains his even in death.’

[17–22] “What then is the reason you are set against taking me away from here, your own wife, a woman of good conduct and faithful to her husband? I am devoted and faithful to my husband. I have always shared your joy and sorrow, and now I am so desolate. You must take me, Kākutstha. Your joy has always been mine to share, and your sorrow. If you refuse to take me to the forest despite the sorrow that I feel, I shall have no recourse but to end my life by poison, fire, or water.” Though she pleaded with him in this and every other way to be allowed to go, great-armed Rāma would not consent to taking her to the desolate forest. And when he told her so, Maithilī fell to brooding, and drenched the ground, it seemed, with the hot tears that fell from her eyes. And even as Vaidehī brooded in this way, pondering how to change his mind, anger took hold of her. But Kākutstha did not lose his self-composure and tried his best to appease her.

Sarga 27

[1–4] Although Rāma tried to appease her, Maithilī, daughter of Janaka, addressed her husband once more in the hopes of living in the forest. Sītā was deeply distraught, and out of love and indignation she began to revile broad-chested Rāghava: “What could my father, Vaideha, the lord of Mithilā, have had in mind when he took you for a son-in-law, Rāma, a woman with the body of a man? How the people lie in their ignorance. Rāma’s ‘great power’ is not at all like the power of the blazing sun, maker of day.

[5–10] “On what grounds are you so reluctant, what are you afraid of that you are ready to desert me, who has no other refuge? Do you not know, my mighty husband, that I bow to your will, that I am as faithful to you as Sāvitrī was to Satyavant, Dyumatsena’s son? Were I to go with you, blameless Rāghava, I would not even think of looking at any man but you,

unlike some women who disgrace their families. But like a procurer, Rāma, you are willing of your own accord to hand me over to others—your wife, who came to you a virgin and who has been a virtuous woman all the long while she has lived with you. You must not leave for the forest without taking me. Let it be austerities, or the wilderness, or heaven, but let it be with you. [z]As I follow behind you I shall no more tire on the path than on our pleasure beds.

[11–15] "The *kuśa* and *kāśa* grass, the reeds, the rushes, and thorn trees will feel just like cotton or a soft pelt to me on the road with you. The dust raised by heavy winds that will settle on me, my love, I shall look upon as the costliest sandalwood paste. As I roam through the deep forest, there will be meadows for me to rest in, and to rest on couches spread with blankets could not give more pleasure. The leaves and roots and fruits you gather with your own hands and give me, however much or little there is, will taste like nectar to me. There will be fruits and flowers in their seasons to enjoy, and I shall not think with longing of my mother or father or home.

[16–20] "And while you are there, you will not know any grief or displeasure on my account. I shall not be a burden. To be with you is heaven, to be without you hell. Knowing how deep my love is, Rāma, you must take me when you go. But if you will not let me go to the forest when I am so set on it, I will take poison this very day, sooner than come under the sway of those who hate us. Afterward I could not survive in any case, my lord, because of the sorrow of being deserted by you. Better for me to die that very instant. For I could not bear the grief of it even for a moment, much less ten years of sorrow, and three, and one."

[21–23] Thus consumed with grief, she lamented long and piteously. Crying out in anguish, she shrieked and embraced her husband with all her might. His many words had wounded her, as poison arrows would a cow elephant. And the tears she had held in so long burst forth like a flame from a kindling stick. Water, clear as crystal, springing from her torment, came gushing from all around her eyes, like water from a pair of lotuses.

[24–27] She was nearly insensible with sorrow when Rāma took her in his arms and comforted her with these words: "If its price were your sorrow, my lady, I would refuse heaven itself. No, I am not afraid of anything, any more than is the self-existent Brahmā. But without knowing your true feelings, my lovely, I could not consent to your living in the

wilderness, though I am perfectly capable of protecting you. Since you are determined to live with me in the forest, Maithilī, I could no sooner abandon you than a self-respecting man his reputation.

[28–33] “But it is righteousness, my smooth-limbed wife, the righteousness good men in the past have practiced, that I am set on following today, as its radiance follows the sun. And righteousness is this, my fair-hipped wife: submission to one’s mother and father. I could not bear to live were I to disobey their command. My father keeps to the path of righteousness and truth, and I wish to act just as he instructs me. That is the eternal way of righteousness. Follow me, my timid one, be my companion in righteousness. Go now and bestow precious objects on the brahmans, give food to the mendicants and all who ask for it. Hurry, don’t delay.” Realizing that her husband had acquiesced in her going, the lady was elated and set out at once to make the donations. Illustrious Sītā was delighted, her every wish fulfilled by what her husband said, and in high spirits, the lovely woman set off to give money and precious objects to all who upheld righteousness.

Sarga 28

[1–4] Mighty Rāma then spoke to Lakṣmaṇa, who came and stood before him, his hands cupped in reverence, begging that he might be allowed to go, in the very lead: “Saumitri, were you to go with me now to the forest, who would support Kausalyā and illustrious Sumitrā? The mighty lord of the earth, who used to shower them with all they desired, as a rain cloud showers the earth, is now caught up in the snare of desire. And once the daughter of King Aśvapati gains control of the kingdom, she will not show any goodwill to her co-wives in their sorrow.”

[5–10] Addressed gently in this fashion by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, who was eloquent and knew proper speech, replied to him: “Your own power, my mighty brother, will no doubt ensure that Bharata scrupulously honors Kausalyā and Sumitrā. The noble Kausalyā could support a thousand men like me, for she has acquired a thousand villages as her living. I will take my bow and arrows and bear the spade and basket. I will go in front of you, leading the way. I will always be there to bring you roots and fruits and such other produce of the forest as is proper fare for ascetics. You shall take

your pleasure with Vaidehī on the mountain slopes while I do everything for you, when you are awake and when you are asleep."

[11–14] Rāma was pleased with his words, and he replied: "Go, Saumitri, and take leave of all your friends. And those two divine, awesome-looking bows that great Varuṇa himself bestowed on Janaka at the grand sacrifice, the two impenetrable suits of divine armor, the two quivers with their inexhaustible arrows, and the two swords—bright as the sun and plated with gold—were all deposited with due reverence in our preceptor's residence. You must collect those armaments, Lakṣmaṇa, and come back at once."

[15–20] So, resolved to live in the forest, he bade farewell to his friends and to the *guru* of the Ikṣvākus, and gathered up those all-powerful arms. [aa]And with due reverence Saumitri, the tiger of the Raghus, displayed to Rāma all that divine weaponry, which was adorned with garlands. When Lakṣmaṇa had come back, Rāma, joyfully and with full self-possession, said to him: "You have come, dear Lakṣmaṇa, at the very moment I desired. I want your help, slayer of enemies, in giving away whatever wealth I possess to the poor brahmans, to the foremost of the twice-born brahmans who live here in firm devotion to my *gurus*, and, in particular, to all of my dependents. Fetch at once the foremost of the twice-born brahmans, noble Suyajña, Vasiṣṭha's son. I will leave for the forest after paying homage to him and all the other twice-born men of learning."

Sarga 29

[1–3] Acknowledging his brother's most just and welcome order, Lakṣmaṇa left and immediately entered Suyajña's house. The priest was in the fire-sanctuary, and, after greeting him, Lakṣmaṇa said, "My friend, come visit the dwelling of the man who is doing what no man has ever done." After performing the evening *sandhyā* rites, he left straightaway with Saumitri and entered Rāma's lovely, majestic house.

[4–9] On the arrival of Suyajña, the master of the *vedas* who shone like a fire ablaze with the offering, Rāghava and Sītā cupped their hands in reverence and approached him. Kākutstha honored Suyajña with gifts—magnificent armbands fashioned of gold, sparkling earrings, gems strung on golden chains, bracelets and wristbands, and many other precious objects. And then, at Sītā's urging, Rāma said to him: "Take this necklace and

golden chain to your wife, my dear friend. Here is a jeweled belt too, which Sītā wishes to give you. She also wishes to bestow upon you this couch with exquisite coverlets, adorned with a variety of gems. And I have an elephant named Śatruṃjaya, given to me by my maternal uncle and worth a thousand others. I make you a gift of him, bull among the twice-born brahmans."

[10–17] When Suyajña had been addressed in this fashion by Rāma, he accepted all those gifts and conferred gracious blessings on Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā. Rāma then addressed his kind, attentive brother Saumitri with kind words, just as Brahmā might address Indra, lord of the thirty gods: "[bb]Saumitri, summon those two eminent brahmans Agastya and Kauśika and, in homage, shower precious objects on them, as crops are showered with rain. And as for the learned preceptor of the Taittirīyas—the master of the *vedas* who devotedly serves Kausalyā with his blessings—present that twice-born brahman with a palanquin and slave-girls, Saumitri, as well as silken garments to his heart's content. And you must give precious objects, garments, and money sufficient to content Citraratha, the noble adviser and charioteer, who has lived with us so long. Also present him with a thousand draft animals, two hundred oxen, and a thousand cows, Saumitri, to provide for his culinary needs." Then Lakṣmaṇa himself, tiger among men, gave the riches as ordered to the lordly brahmans, just as might Kubera, bestower of wealth.

[18–22] Now, after Rāma had bestowed such great wealth on each and every one of his dependents, he spoke to them as they stood before him choked with tears: "Both Lakṣmaṇa's dwelling and the house belonging to me may be occupied until I return." After speaking with all his sorrowful dependents, he turned to the keeper of the treasury and said: "Have my treasure brought." His dependents then fetched all his treasure. And the tiger among men, with Lakṣmaṇa's help, had the treasure distributed to the needy twice-born brahmans, young and old alike. There came a sallow twice-born brahman then, by the name of Trijaṭa Gārgya, all the way up to the fifth courtyard without anyone stopping him.

[23–27] When he came before the prince, Trijaṭa said: "Glorious prince, I am impoverished and have many children. I must live by constant gleaning in the forest. Please have regard for me." Rāma then replied to him jokingly: "There are still one thousand cows I have not yet bestowed. You

shall have as many as you can cover by hurling your staff.” In a frantic rush, he girded up the rag around his loins and, brandishing his staff impetuously, hurled it with every ounce of his strength. Rāma then said to Gārgya, seeking to placate him: “You must not be angry, truly. This was only a joke on my part.” Then the great sage Trijaṭa, along with his wife, accepted the herd of cows and pronounced blessings on the great prince conducive to fame, strength, joy, and happiness.

Sarga 30

[1–4] Now, after the two Rāghavas and Vaidehī had bestowed vast wealth upon the brahmans, they went to see their father. How brilliant they looked when they took up their formidable weapons, which Sītā had ornamented and hung with flower garlands. The wealthy townsfolk went up to the roofs of their palaces and mansions and to the tops of many-storied buildings and watched despondently. The streets were so thronged with people as to be impassable, and so they went up to the roofs of their palaces and in desolation gazed down at Rāghava.

[5–9] When the people saw Rāma going on foot and without the royal parasol, their hearts were crushed with grief, and they said many different things: “The prince, whom a vast army of four divisions used to follow as he went forth, is all alone now, with only Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā to follow behind him. Though he has known the taste of kingly power and has always granted the wishes of the needy, in his veneration for righteousness he refuses to let his father break his word. People on the royal highway can now look at Sītā, a woman whom even creatures of the sky have never had a glimpse of before. Sītā is used to cosmetics and partial to red sandalwood paste, but the rain, the heat, and the cold will soon ruin her complexion.

[10–12] “[cc]Surely it is some spirit that has possessed Daśaratha and spoken today, for the king could never bring himself to exile his beloved son. How could a man force his own son into exile, even an unvirtuous son, let alone one who has vanquished the world simply by his good conduct? Benevolence, compassion, learning, good character, restraint, and equanimity—these are the six virtues that adorn Rāghava, the best of men.

[13–14] “Therefore the people are sorely hurt by any injury to him, like aquatic creatures when the water dries up in the hot season. When the lord of the world is hurt, so is all the world, as the fruit and flowers of a tree are

hurt by an injury to its root. Let us at once take our wives and our kinsmen, and—like Lakṣmaṇa—follow Rāghava as he goes forth, wherever he may go.

[15–20] “Let us abandon our gardens, our fields and homes, and follow righteous Rāma, to share his sorrow and joy. Let us unearth our buried treasure, remove our stores of grain and our wealth, and take all our valuables. And when the household gods have abandoned them, and their courtyards are falling into disrepair and the dust settling thick upon them, let Kaikeyī take possession of the dwellings we have left behind. Let the wilderness to which Rāghava is going become our city, and the city we abandon turn into a wilderness. Let all the animals leave their haunts, the snakes their lairs, the birds and beasts their mountain slopes, and take possession of what we have abandoned.”

[21–24] Such were the various comments different people were making, and Rāma heard them, but still he did not alter his resolve. [dd]And even when Rāma saw the people in their anguish, not the least anguish touched him—he was smiling instead as he walked on, eager to see his father, eager to carry out his father’s order faithfully. Rāma, the great son of Daśaratha Aikṣvāka, on the point of leaving for the forest, caught sight of the anguished Sumantra, and only then did he come to a halt, in order to gain admittance to his father. Because he so cherished righteousness, Rāghava had his mind firmly made up to enter the forest on his father’s order. With a glance at Sumantra, he said, “Announce my arrival to the king.”

Sarga 31

[1–8] Dispatched by Rāma, the charioteer, his senses numb with misery, entered at once. He saw the lord of men heaving sighs. The wise charioteer gazed at him grieving over Rāma in deep mental turmoil. He then approached with his hands cupped in reverence, and said: “Tiger among men, your son is here waiting at the door. He has given away all his wealth to the brahmans and his dependents. Let Rāma, who always strives for truth, come and see you, please. He has taken leave of all his friends and now wishes to see you. He is about to depart for the great forest. Lord of the world, grant him audience, a man whom all kingly virtues encircle as beams encircle the sun.” The truthful and righteous lord of men, like the ocean in profundity and as free from taint as the sky, replied: “Sumantra, bring all

my wives to me. I wish to see Rāghava in the company of all my wives." Sumantra then went straight into the inner apartments and said to the women, "The king, your husband, summons you. Go to him at once."

[9–11] When Sumantra had addressed them in this fashion by order of the king, all the women proceeded to their husband's chamber in compliance with his command. Half seven hundred ladies with coppery eyes, who held firm to their vows, gathered around Kausalyā and slowly made their way. When the king and lord of the earth observed that his wives had come, he said to the charioteer, "Sumantra, now bring my son."

[12–17] Then, together with Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Maithilī, the charioteer at once came forward into the presence of the lord of the world. Seeing his son at a distance approaching with his hands cupped in reverence, the tormented king in the midst of his womenfolk started up suddenly from his throne. At the sight of Rāma the lord of the people ran impetuously forward, but, broken by sorrow, he fell to the ground in a faint before he reached him. Rāma flew to him at once, as did the great chariot-warrior Lakṣmaṇa, as the lord of men lay insensible with sorrow and lost in grief. And suddenly in the king's chamber there broke out a shrill cry of "Alas, alas! Rāma!" on the part of thousands of women, their cry made all the louder by the jingling of their jewelry. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa both took him in their arms, and, with Sītā's help, they laid him on a couch, all three of them in tears.

[18–23] After a moment the lord of the earth, overwhelmed by a sea of grief, regained consciousness. Then Rāma cupped his hands in reverence and said to him: "I ask leave of you, your majesty, for you are lord of us all. I am about to set out for the Daṇḍaka forest. Look kindly on me and give your leave also to Lakṣmaṇa. Sītā too shall follow me to the forest. Neither of them could be dissuaded despite the many sound arguments I offered. Have done with grieving, bestower of honor, and give leave to us all, to Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā, and me, as Prajāpati, lord of creatures, once gave his children leave." Rāghava waited intently for the lord of the world to grant him permission to live in the forest. The king looked at him and said: "Rāghava, I was deceived by Kaikeyī into granting a boon. Imprison me now and become king of Ayodhyā yourself."

[24–816*–27] When Rāma had been addressed in this way by his father, the lord of men, he, foremost of those who uphold righteousness, cupped

his hands in reverence and in full command of his words replied to him: “You shall be lord of the earth, your majesty, for countless years to come, and I will live in the wilderness. You must not on my account act untruthfully. [ee]After I have passed the nine years and five of life in the forest, I shall once again clasp your feet, lord of men, when the promise has been fulfilled.” The king wept in anguish at the snare of truth in which he was caught. But under silent pressure from Kaikeyī, he said at last to his beloved son: “Go in safety, my child, and may no harm befall you. May your way be safe and free from all dangers, and may it lead you to good fortune, prosperity, and back home once more. But by no means must you go now, this evening, my son. Spend the night in the company of your mother and me. Tomorrow morning, with all your desires satisfied, you may set out.”

[28–32] When Rāma heard the words of his anguished father, he was desolate, and so was his brother Lakṣmaṇa. He replied: “Who will confer upon me tomorrow the benefits I should have tonight? I prefer, to any objects of desire, merely to depart. I abdicate all claim to this treasure-laden earth, its kingdom and people, its stores of grain and wealth. Let it be made over to Bharata. So put an end to your sorrow, do not let tears overwhelm you. The indomitable lord of rivers, the ocean, remains forever unperturbed. It is not kingship or comfort or even Maithilī that I desire, but that you be truthful, bull among men, not false.

[33–38] “I abdicate the city, the kingdom, and the entire land. Let it all be made over to Bharata. I will obey your command and leave for my long stay in the forest. Let Bharata hold absolute rule over the land I abdicate—this kindly land with its firm boundaries, its mountain ranges, towns, and woodlands. Let it be as you have said, lord of men. Never to the same degree have I set my heart on great objects of desire or on my own pleasure, your majesty, as on your command, which men of learning always endorse. Put an end to your sorrow on my account, my blameless father. If it meant entangling you in falsehood, my blameless father, I would reject sovereign kingship, reject all objects of desire, all comforts, Maithilī, and even life itself. The truth of your vow must be preserved. For once I enter the forest with its variegated trees, I shall be happy eating fruits and roots and observing mountains, rivers, and lakes. Therefore, you should be happy as well.”

Sarga 32

[1–8] Tormented by his own promise, Daśaratha Aikṣvāka, sighing deeply again and again, in an urgent voice tearfully said this to Sumantra: “Charioteer, I want an army, a force of the full four divisions, to be provisioned with every luxury and marshaled at once as escort for Rāghava. Let there be eminent courtesans to adorn the prince’s retinue and prosperous merchants with choice wares to display. You must handsomely pay all his dependents and all those whose acts of strength have pleased him and assign them to his suite as well. Killing deer and elephants, drinking forest liquor, and viewing the different rivers, he will not think with longing of the kingdom. The entire contents of my granary and treasury are to go with Rāma while he lives in the desolate forest. His life in the forest will be pleasant, what with holding sacrifices at holy places, conferring fitting priestly stipends, and consorting with seers. Great-armed Bharata shall protect Ayodhyā. Let majestic Rāma be sent off with every object of desire.”

[9–13] While Kākutstha was speaking in this fashion, Kaikeyī was gripped by fear. Her mouth went dry and her voice was choked. [ff]Pale and frightened, Kaikeyī spoke out, “My good man, Bharata will not take charge of a kingdom stripped of its wealth, like a cup of wine drained to the dregs, an empty kingdom bare of all objects of enjoyment!” While Kaikeyī was speaking so viciously in this way, abandoning all shame, King Daśaratha answered his large-eyed wife, “Will you yoke me to a burden, malicious woman, and beat me even as I bear it?” But Kaikeyī’s fury was only redoubled, and she said to the king: “It was in your lineage that Sagara dispossessed his eldest son, who was known as Asamañja. This one, Rāma, must leave in the same way.” Thus addressed, King Daśaratha merely replied, “Damn you!” And although all the people were ashamed of her, she paid them no mind.

[14–18] Then an aged minister named Siddhārtha, an honest man esteemed by the king, addressed Kaikeyī: “But that evil-minded Asamañja took pleasure in seizing children playing on the road and then hurling them into the waters of the Sarayū. When the people of the city saw this, they were all enraged and told the king, ‘Increaser of the realm, you must choose one: either Asamañja or us.’ The king asked, ‘What has happened to cause this fear of yours?’ and the citizens responded to the king’s inquiry with

these words: ‘When our little children are out playing, this madman hurls them into the Sarayū and enjoys it to no end in his insanity.’

[19–22] “When he heard what the people said, the lord of men renounced his malevolent son in his desire to please them. It was thus righteous King Sagara renounced him. But what evil has Rāma done that he should be dispossessed like that?” After listening to Siddhārtha’s speech, the king, in a failing voice and in words fraught with grief, said to Kaikeyī: “I will accompany Rāma today, renouncing altogether the kingdom, pleasure, and wealth. And with King Bharata may you long enjoy the kingdom to your heart’s content.”

Sarga 33

[1–5] When Rāma had heard the minister’s speech, he, familiar with proper deference as he was, addressed Daśaratha deferentially: “I have given up pleasures, your majesty, and shall live in the wilderness on things of the wild. I have given up all attachments; what use then have I of an escort? Would a man who gives away a prize elephant cling to the cinch-belt? Why would he concern himself with the rope after giving up the splendid elephant? So it is for me too, best of men and lord of the world. What use have I for a many-bannered army? I must refuse it all. Let them bring me only barkcloth garments. And have them bring me a small basket too, and a spade, before I go to the forest to dwell there for fourteen years.”

[6–8] Kaikeyī herself then brought the barkcloth garments to Rāghava, shamelessly ordering him, “Put them on!” before the crowd of people. The tiger among men took a pair of them from Kaikeyī, and, putting aside his delicate garments, he dressed himself in the clothes of a sage. Lakṣmaṇa too, then and there, removed his lovely clothing and put on the garb of an ascetic, right before his father.

[9–13] Then Sītā, who was dressed in silks, seeing the barkcloth garment that was meant for her to wear, was frightened, like a spotted doe at the sight of a trap. Disconcerted and embarrassed, she took it up. Then she said to her husband, the very image of the king of *gandharvas*, “How do the sages who live in the forest put on barkcloth?” She picked one up in her hand and held it to her neck and stood there, the daughter of Janaka, awkward and ashamed. At once Rāma, foremost of those who uphold righteousness, came to Sītā and, with his own hands, fastened it over her

silks. Dressed in barkcloth, she stood there as if defenseless, though her defender was at her side, while the people all cried out, “Damn you, Daśaratha!”

[14–19] Daśaratha Aikṣvāka heaved a burning sigh as he said to his wife: “Kaikeyī, Sītā must not go in garments of bark and *kuśa* grass. Surely it suffices you, evil creature, that Rāma is being exiled. Must you heap these vile crimes on top of that?” With this, the king hung his head and sat still, and Rāma addressed him once more before leaving for the forest: “Righteous Father, Kausalyā here, my illustrious mother, is an aged woman of noble character, and she does not reproach you, my lord. She has never known adversity before, and bereft of me she will be plunged into a sea of grief. Show her higher regard, please, granter of boons. Equal of great Indra, this mother of mine dotes on her child. Please, take care that she not be tortured with grief when I am in the forest, that she does not lay down her life and go her way to the house of Yama, god of death.”

Sarga 34

[1–7] Upon hearing Rāma’s words and seeing him dressed in the garb of a sage, the king, along with all his wives, was stricken senseless. He was so broken by sorrow that he could not look at Rāghava, so sick at heart that he could not address him to his face. The great-armed lord of the earth fell unconscious for a moment, and then in sorrow he began to lament, thinking only of Rāma: “I think that in the past I must have injured many living things or made many childless; since such a thing has befallen me. Before one’s fated hour has come life cannot slip from the body, for Kaikeyī has tortured me and still I am not dead—I who see before me my own son, who resembles the purifying fire, taking off his delicate garments and dressing in the clothes of an ascetic. The people too are tortured, and all because one woman, Kaikeyī, resorted to this deception in the pursuit of her own ends.”

[8–13] After speaking in this fashion, his eyes dimmed by tears, he cried out, “Rāma!” only once, and then could speak no more. But when, after a moment, he regained his senses, the lord of the earth, his eyes filled with tears, said to Sumantra: “Harness the finest horses to a royal carriage and return; you must convey my illustrious son out of this country. Such, I guess, must be the reward the virtuous earn by their virtues, if this good and heroic prince is exiled to the forest by his mother and his father.”

Acknowledging the king's command, Sumantra left at a quick pace. He harnessed the horses to the decorated carriage and then returned. Cupping his hands in reverence, the charioteer informed the prince that the carriage was standing ready, ornamented with gold and harnessed with excellent horses.

[14–18] The king hurriedly summoned the officer in charge of the treasury. [gg]He was a meticulous and altogether honest man, with an accurate knowledge of times and places. "Go at once," he told him, "and fetch precious garments and choice ornaments for Vaidehī, calculating against the number of years." Thus addressed by the lord of men, he went at once to the treasure room, brought all of that, and presented it to Sītā. Noble Vaidehī, on the point of leaving for the forest, adorned her noble limbs with the sparkling jewelry. And in her rich adornment, Vaidehī cast a deep luster over the chamber—it was like daybreak when Vivasvant, the sun, rises and spreads its splendor over the sky.

[19–21] Kausalyā, her mother-in-law, then took Maithilī in her arms, kissed her on the forehead, and then said to the virtuous princess: "When women who have been constantly gratified with things to please them do not hold their husbands in respect when they have fallen low, they are regarded as wicked women in the eyes of all the world. You must not feel disdain for my son in his banishment. He is your deity, whether he be rich or poor."

[22–28] Sītā knew her words were in harmony with what was right and good, and, with her hands cupped in reverence, she faced her mother-in-law and replied: "I will act exactly as my noble lady instructs me. I fully understand how to behave toward my husband; I have learned well. My lady ought not to liken me to wicked people. I could no more leave the path of righteousness than its radiance can leave the moon. Without strings a lute cannot be played, without wheels a chariot cannot move, and without her husband a woman finds no happiness, though she may have a hundred sons. There is a limit to what a father can give, a limit to what a mother or son can give, but a husband gives without any limit. What wife would not revere him? I for my part understand this; I am a high-born woman who has learned right from wrong. My lady, how could I be disdainful? A husband is a woman's deity." As Kausalyā listened to Sītā, the words touched the good woman's heart, and she suddenly burst out in tears of joy and sorrow.

[29–31] Then Rāma, who understood best of all the meaning of righteousness, cupped his hands in reverence and approached his mother where she stood in the place of honor among the others. And he said to her: “Do not be sorrowful, mother. Have regard for my father. My stay in the forest will soon be over. The nine years and five will pass for you like a night’s sleep, and you will see me in the company of my loved ones, having come home safe and sound.”

[32–36] These few sensible words were all he said to the woman who bore him. Then he turned his gaze and looked at his other three hundred and fifty mothers. They were just as deeply anguished, and, with his hands cupped in reverence, the son of Daśaratha addressed them with these righteous words: “If in our living together I ever showed you any rudeness, however unwittingly, please forgive me for it. I bid you all farewell.” But even as Rāghava was speaking in this fashion, a scream broke out like the crying of *krauñca* hens from the wives of the lord of men. The palace of Daśaratha, where once *muraja* and *paṇava* drums rumbled like storm clouds, was now filled with lamentation and wailing, so bitter was the sorrow of this calamity.

Sarga 35

[1–8] In desolation Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa clasped the feet of the king. Then, cupping their hands, they reverently circled him. After taking leave of him, Sītā and righteous Rāghava, distraught with grief, did obeisance to his mother. Directly after his brother, Lakṣmaṇa did obeisance to Kausalyā and then clasped the feet of his own mother, Sumitrā. As great-armed Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri paid reverence to his mother, she wept and kissed him on the forehead, and, with his welfare at heart, she said to him: “You are determined to live in the forest out of deep loyalty to your loved ones. Do not be inattentive, my son, when your brother Rāma is making his way. He is your one refuge in times of both adversity and prosperity, my blameless son. The way of righteousness good people follow in the world is just this: submission to the will of one’s elders. Remember, too, the conduct that has been the age-old custom of this House: liberality, consecration for sacrifice, and readiness to give up one’s life in battle. Look upon Rāma as Daśaratha, look upon Janaka’s daughter as me, look upon the woods as Ayodhyā. Go in happiness, my dear son.”

[9–11] Then Sumantra, who understood deference, cupped his hands in reverence and with deference, addressed Kākutstha as Mātali might address Vāsava: “Bless you! Be pleased to mount the carriage, glorious prince, and I will at once convey you wherever you tell me, Rāma. For you must now commence the fourteen years of life in the forest, which the queen has forced upon you.”

[12–16] When fair-hipped Sītā had finished ornamenting herself, with a cheerful heart she boarded the carriage that stood gleaming like the sun. Sumantra placed inside the driver’s box the brothers’ collection of weapons, their armor, and the leather basket, and when he saw they both had boarded with Sītā, he briskly urged on the superb horses, as swift as the wind. As Rāghava set out for his long stay in the great wilderness, a wave of stupor passed through the city, overwhelming the army and the people. There was turmoil and confusion in the town, the elephants became wild and unruly, and the horses clangored noisily.

[17–23] The town was in utter agony. The people—young and old alike—began to run straight toward Rāma, as men tormented by summer’s heat run toward water. Hanging on to the chariot’s sides and back, they raised their tearful faces, and in their bitter sorrow they all cried out: “Charioteer, draw in the horses’ reins, go slowly, slowly! Let us look upon Rāma’s face, for soon it will be lost to our sight. Surely the heart of Rāma’s mother must be made of iron if it does not break as her godlike child is going off to the forest. Vaidehī has accomplished her purpose—she follows her lord like a shadow, earnest in doing what is right, and can no more leave him than sunlight can leave Mount Meru. Ah, Lakṣmaṇa, you have achieved your goal; you will have the chance to serve your kind-spoken, godlike brother all the while. This is a great achievement for you, a great blessing, the way to heaven, that you are following after him.” As they said these things, their tears welled up and they could not hold them back.

[24–26] Then, in his desolation, the king, accompanied by his desolate wives, emerged from the palace, crying, “Let me see my beloved son!” Before him could be heard a mighty din of women crying, like the wailing of cow elephants when their great bull is captured. Rāma’s father, majestic King Kākutstha, now looked as pallid as the full, hare-marked moon dimmed at the hour of eclipse.

[27–31] Then, behind Rāma, a tumultuous clamor broke out among the men as they saw the king collapsing under his heavy sorrow. “Oh Rāma!” some of the people wailed, and others cried out, “Oh Rāma’s mother!” while all the women of the inner apartments lamented over the crying king. Rāma glanced back and saw his mother and the dazed and wretched king trailing behind him. But he was caught up in the snare of righteousness and could not gaze at them openly. They were on foot who should have ridden, who had known only comfort and did not deserve such suffering. And when he saw them, he exhorted the charioteer, crying out, “Go faster!” For the tiger among men could not bear the heartrending sight of his father and mother; it was like a goad tormenting an elephant.

[32–38] Kausalyā ran weeping after the carriage, crying, “Rāma, Rāma! Oh Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa!” He glanced back often at his mother, who seemed almost to be dancing. With the king crying, “Stop!” and Rāghava, “Go on! Go on!” Sumantra’s very heart seemed caught between two wheels. But Rāma said to him: “If the king should rebuke you, you can tell him you did not hear him. For to prolong his suffering would the worst thing of all.” He did as Rāma told him, and, taking leave of the people, the charioteer urged on the already racing horses. After the king’s people had reverently circled Rāma, they turned back, but their hearts did not, nor the rush of their tears. To the great king Daśaratha his ministers then said, “A person one hopes to see returning should not be followed out too far.” The king heeded what they said, for it conformed with every virtue, and then, despondent and wretched, his body bathed in sweat, he halted with his wives, gazing out after his son.

Sarga 36

[1–6] As the tiger among men was departing, his hands cupped in reverence, a loud cry of anguish broke out from the women of the inner apartments: “Where can our defender be going, he who was the recourse and refuge of this weak, defenseless, and miserable people? He never grows angry, whatever the insult, he avoids giving cause for anger, he calms the angry and shares every sorrow—where is he going? The mighty prince who treats us as he treats his own mother, Kausalyā—where can the great man be going? Kaikeyī hounded the king until he drove him into the forest. Where can the guardian of this people, of the entire world, be going? The

king must be mad to exile Rāma to a life in the forest, a righteous prince, devoted to truth and who is loved by every living soul on earth.”

[7–11] Thus did all the queens, like cows who have lost their calves, weep in the torment of their sorrow and shrilly wail. Already inflamed with grief for his son, the lord of the earth grew yet more sorrowful, still hearing the dreadful cry of anguish from the women of the inner apartments. No *agnihotra* rites were offered, and the sun vanished. Elephants let their fodder drop, cows would not suckle their calves. The constellation Triśañku, the planets Mars, Jupiter, and Mercury too, all took ominous positions athwart the moon. The stars lost their radiance, the planets lost their glow, and the constellation Viśākhā shone, clouded by smoke, in the sky.

[12–17] A wave of despair swept suddenly over all the people of the city, and no one gave any thought to nourishment or amusements. The faces of the people on the royal highway were awash with tears. No one showed any sign of delight; all were lost in grief. The cool breeze stopped blowing, the hare-marked moon no longer looked serene, the sun did not warm the world, the universe was in chaos. Husbands became indifferent to their wives, children became indifferent, and brothers too. All turned their back on everyone else and gave their thoughts to Rāma alone. As for Rāma’s friends, they were all bewildered; crushed by the weight of their grief, they could not arise from where they lay fallen. Abandoned by the great prince, Ayodhyā, with all its hosts of soldiers and herds of horses and elephants, was tormented by a heavy weight of fear and began to quake dreadfully and resound, just as the earth would, mountains and all, if abandoned by Indra, smasher of citadels.

Sarga 37

[1–5] Now, as Rāma was departing, he raised a cloud of dust, and as long as it was visible, the best of the Ikṣvākus could not turn his eyes away. As long as the king could see his beloved, righteous son, he seemed to stand firm on the ground just to have him in sight. But once the lord of the earth could no longer see even Rāma’s dust, in anguish and despair he fell to the ground. His wife Kausalyā came up and stood by his right arm, and to his left side came Kaikeyī, whose only love was for Bharata. The king, a man of

prudence, righteousness, and courtesy, stared at Kaikeyī, his senses reeling, and said:

[6–11] “Kaikeyī, do not touch me, you evil woman, I do not want to see you. You are not my wife, you have no relationship to me. And your dependents have nothing to do with me, nor I with them. In pure selfishness you repudiated righteousness, and I repudiate you. Once I took your hand and led you round the marriage fire, but now I renounce it all, both in this world and the next. And if Bharata should be pleased at securing sovereign kingship, may any funeral offering he makes never reach me.” [hh]As the lord of men lay coated with dust, Queen Kausalyā helped him up and, racked with grief, began to lead him home. As if he had intentionally slain a brahman, or held his hand in a fire, the righteous king burned with remorse to think of his son living a life of asceticism.

[12–18] Turning back again and again, he collapsed in the ruts of the carriage, and his figure, like the many-rayed sun’s at the hour of eclipse, lost all its splendor. Tortured with sorrow, he began to lament as he thought with longing of his beloved son. He imagined his son to be returning to the city, and said: “I see the tracks in the road made by the splendid horses carrying my great son, but I cannot see him. No, surely he is now resting somewhere, at the foot of a tree, where he will sleep with a log or a stone for his pillow. Wretched and caked with dirt, he will heave a sigh as he arises from the ground, like the bull of an elephant herd emerging from a mountain stream. Men who live in the forest will probably be watching as long-armed Rāma, the protector of the world, gets up and pushes on like one who lacks a protector. I hope you are satisfied, Kaikeyī; now you must live in the kingdom as a widow. For, without the tiger among men, I cannot bear to live.”

[19–21] As the king lamented in this way, he reentered the best of cities surrounded by a mass of people the way a mourner enters a cremation ground. The squares and courtyards were empty, the shops and temples closed, the thoroughfares nearly deserted, the people haggard, feeble, and racked with sorrow—such was the sight that met the king’s eyes. But his thoughts were for Rāma alone, and, lost in lamentation, he entered his dwelling, like the sun passing behind a cloud.

[22–28] In the absence of Rāma, Vaidehī, and Lakṣmaṇa, his palace resembled a great, placid lake from which Suparṇa has snatched all the

serpents. “Take me at once to the dwelling of Kausalyā, Rāma’s mother,” the king demanded, and the watchmen at the gate took him. He entered Kausalyā’s chamber and lay upon the couch, and his mind began to reel. Looking around, the great and mighty king reached out his arms and cried at the top of his voice: “Oh Rāghava, you have abandoned me! How fortunate those good men who will be alive at the hour when Rāma comes back and who will see him and embrace him. I cannot see you, Kausalyā! Oh please touch me with your hand. My sight has followed after Rāma and has not yet returned.” Seeing the lord of men on the couch lost in brooding about Rāma, the queen sat down close beside him, in the greatest anguish. She heaved a deep sigh and then began to lament bitterly.

Sarga 38

[1–5] Kausalyā gazed at the lord of the earth as he lay on the couch prostrate with grief. Racked with grief for her son, she spoke: “Now that Kaikeyī, like a fork-tongued viper, has spit her venom on Rāghava, the tiger among men, she will behave like a snake that has shed its skin. Now that she has had her way and exiled Rāma, the charming creature will apply herself to further terrorizing me, like a vicious serpent in the house. If only Rāma could have lived at home though it meant his begging in the city streets! You had the freedom to grant such a boon, which at the worst had made my son a slave. But you let Kaikeyī at her own sweet pleasure throw Rāma from his place and assign him as a portion for *rākṣasas*, the way a sacrificer at the half-month rites throws a portion away for them.

[6–10] “My mighty son, the great-armed bowman with a step like a king of elephants, is probably now entering the forest with his wife and Lakṣmaṇa. They have never known the sorrows of the forest, but you yielded to Kaikeyī and abandoned them to a life in the forest. What can be their lot? Stripped of everything of value and exiled at the very hour of their triumph, how are these three wretched young people to live with nothing but fruits and roots to eat? If only it were now the hour that mercifully will end my grief, when I set eyes on Rāghava again with his wife and brother. When will Ayodhyā hear that the two mighty brothers have come back and once again be a glorious city, crowded with delighted people, garlanded with high-flying banners?

[11–16] “When will the city see those tigers among men returned from the forest and exult in delight like the ocean on a full-moon night? When will the great-armed mighty prince enter the city of Ayodhyā with Sītā on the carriage ahead of him, like a cow before her bull? When will people by the thousands go out onto the royal highway to scatter parched grain upon my two foe-taming sons as they make their entrance? When will maidens proffer flowers and fruits to the twice-born brahmans and reverently circle the city in delight? When will he come back to me—my righteous son, young as a deathless god yet with an old man’s wisdom and boyishness that warms my heart? I guess, my mighty husband, yes, it must no doubt be that once upon a time, when calves were thirsting to drink, I ruthlessly hacked off the udders of the cows, their mothers.

[17–20] “And so now, tiger among men, I who love my child so have been made childless by Kaikeyī, as brutally as a lion might do to a cow with her young calf. For I have but one son—he is gifted with every virtue, a master of all learning—and without my son I cannot bear to live. I have not the least bit of strength to live in this world if I cannot see my beloved and mighty great-armed son. Here, see, a fire kindled by grief for my son has burst forth and is ravaging me, as the earth is ravaged in summertime by the rays of the blazing, holy sun, maker of day.”

Sarga 39

[1–5] While Kausalyā, the foremost of women, was lamenting in this fashion, Sumitrā, standing firm by what was right, addressed her with these righteous words: “My noble lady, your son is the very best of men and truly virtuous. What need have you to lament like this and weep so wretchedly? You should never grieve over Rāma, my lady, so excellent a son. Powerful as he is, he left, surrendering the kingship, to ensure that his great father might be true to his word. He took his stand by righteousness as the learned scrupulously practice it, and which has its rewards everlastingly, even after death. Blameless Lakṣmaṇa will be a blessing to the great prince. He has always behaved with perfect propriety toward him, and he shows compassion to all creatures.

[6–10] “Although Vaidehī is fully aware of how painful life in the wilderness is, although she has known only comfort, still she is following your righteous son. What gain has your mighty son failed to reap, who is

waving the banner of his fame throughout the world by his self-restraint and devotion to truth? Clearly the sun will recognize Rāma's purity and incomparable grandeur, and will not dare to burn his body with its rays. A pleasant breeze will attend on Rāghava, blowing through the woodlands, gracious at all seasons, with temperate warmth or coolness. As the blameless prince sleeps at night, the moon—like a father—will clasp him in its embrace, caress him with cool beams, and refresh him.

[11–16] "Then, too, the mighty prince was given divine weapon-spells by Brahmā, when he saw him slay in battle the lord of *dānavas*, Timidhvaja's son. Together with these three—Pṛthivī, goddess of the earth, Vaidehī, and Śrī, goddess of royal fortune—Rāma, bull among men, will soon be consecrated. Your eyes will soon drop joyful tears for the one you watched depart with tears of sorrow falling. Soon you will see your child and his loved ones greeting you, and you will shed tears of gladness like a string of clouds in the rains. Your son will soon return to Ayodhyā to grant you every boon. He will soon bow down and clasp your feet with his firm and gentle hands." When Rāma's mother, the wife of the god among men, had listened to the words of Lakṣmaṇa's mother, her deep-seated grief suddenly dissipated, like a cloud in the autumn when it holds but little water.

Sarga 40

[1–4] Now, as the great prince Rāma, who always strove for truth, was setting out to make his life in the forest, the people who were devoted to him followed after him. They would not stop following Rāma's carriage even though the multitude of his loved ones and the king had been forced to turn back. For to those who lived in Ayodhyā, the glorious and virtuous prince was as well loved as the full moon. His subjects kept pleading with him, but Kākutstha, to ensure his father's truthfulness, pressed on toward the forest.

[5–10] Rāma gazed at his people with affection, as if to drink them in with his eyes. And he spoke to them affectionately as though they were his children: "Let the love and respect the residents of Ayodhyā feel for me be transferred in full to Bharata, as a kindness to me. Bharata, the delight of Kaikeyī, is of exemplary conduct, and he will do all that is required to ensure your welfare and happiness. Though only a boy, he has an old man's

wisdom, though gentle he is endowed with all the virtues of a hero. He will be a fit master for you and will shield you from all danger. He possesses all the virtues a king requires, and he has been recognized as prince regent. Then, too, as I myself have instructed you, you must obey your master's order. And finally, if you would do me a kindness, please take care that the great king does not suffer when I have gone to live in the forest."

[11–15] But the more committed to righteousness Dāśarathi showed himself to be, the more the subjects desired to have him as their lord. By their virtues Rāma and Saumitri seemed to bind and draw to them the desolate, tearful people of the city. Now, certain twice-born brahmans who were elders on three counts—by their years, wisdom, and authority—began to cry out from afar, their heads trembling with age: "Ho there, ho! you purebred horses speeding away with Rāma. Stop, turn back! Be good to your master. You should be carrying your master back, not away from the city to the forest." When Rāma perceived the anguished outcry raised by the aged twice-born brahmans, he alighted at once from the carriage.

[16–20] Then Rāma, together with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, proceeded on foot, with measured tread, his heart set wholly on the forest. For the twice-born brahmans were on foot, and Rāma looked with pity on them. He so cherished propriety that he could not ride off and leave them. Seeing that Rāma only continued on, the twice-born brahmans were disconcerted and in deep agony they said to him: "The entire twice-born brahman order will follow you, who are deferential to brahmans, and these sacred fires will accompany you, borne on the shoulders of the twice-born. Just see the white umbrellas given to us at the *vājapeya* rite, which are following along behind you like *haṃsas* when the rains have ended.

[21–25] "Since you never received your royal parasol, we will shade you with these, our own *vājapeya* umbrellas, when the sun's rays are scorching you. We have always turned our minds to the study of the vedic *mantras*, but now our minds are made up on your account, dear boy, to turn to a life in the forest. Our greatest treasure, the *vedas*, lies stored in our hearts; our wives shall stay at home protected by their chastity. This resolution of ours will not be reconsidered; we have made up our minds to go with you. But as you have always been the one who has shown regard for righteousness, will any regard now be paid to what is right? We have bowed our heads, white-haired as the *haṃsa* and covered now with dust from prostrating on the

ground; we have pleaded with you to return, you who have always done what is proper.

[26–30] “For many of us twice-born brahmans who have come here have already commenced sacrifices. Their consummation depends on your returning, dear child. All living things, moving and unmoving, are filled with devotion for you. Show your devotion to these devotees who are pleading with you. [ii]Even the trees, unable to follow you as their roots prevent their movement, seem to be mourning as the gusting wind uplifts their branches. And the birds as well have stopped flitting about and foraging for food. They sit in one place in the trees, pleading, it seems, with you, who have always taken pity on all creatures.” And even as the twice-born brahmans sent up this mournful wail in order to turn Rāghava back, the Tamasā River came into view to aid, so it seemed, in stopping him.

Sarga 41

[1–8] Now, when Rāghava had reached the lovely bank of the Tamasā, with a glance at Sītā he spoke these words to Saumitri: “Night has now come to the forest, the very first of our dwelling in the forest. But bless you, Saumitri, please do not be sad. Look, the woodlands are desolate, but all around they seem to weep: birds and beasts are hidden within them, each gone to its own lair. Surely the city of Ayodhyā, my father’s capital, will grieve tonight, every man and woman, for us who have gone away. But I know that righteous Bharata will comfort my father and mother, speaking words in harmony with what is right, beneficial, and desirable. I have been reflecting all the while on Bharata’s good-heartedness, and I no longer feel grief for my father, Lakṣmaṇa, or even for my mother. You have done your duty in accompanying me, tiger among men. But let me also seek your help in looking after Vaidehī. I myself, however, will take nothing but water tonight. This is what I prefer, though all kinds of forest fare are at hand.”

[9–15] When he had addressed Saumitri in this fashion, Rāghava turned to Sumantra and said, “Do not neglect the horses, dear friend.” Sumantra then tethered the horses as the sun was setting and, after giving them abundant fodder, waited in attendance. Once Rāma had worshiped the gracious twilight and had seen that nightfall was at hand, the charioteer—with Saumitri’s help—made a bed for Rāma. Escorted by Saumitri, Rāma saw the bed of leaves made ready near the bank of the Tamasā, and he and

his wife then lay down. Once Lakṣmaṇa saw that his brother had fallen asleep with his wife, he recounted for the charioteer Rāma's many virtues. Saumitri remained awake all night long, and, even as the sun rose, he was still speaking of Rāma's virtues with the charioteer on the bank of the Tamasā. There, at some distance from the Tamasā where herds of cattle crowded the bank, Rāma spent the night with the people.

[16–21] And when, on rising, Rāma of blazing energy observed the people, he said to his brother Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks: "Look at them now, Lakṣmaṇa, asleep under the trees. They care only for us, Saumitri, with no regard even for their own homes. Such is their resolve to turn us back that the townsfolk would sooner throw their lives away than abandon it. So, while they are still asleep, we must quickly board the carriage and depart, taking a path free from danger. Henceforth, no resident of the city of the Ikṣvākus should now, or ever, have to sleep at the foot of a tree out of loyalty to me. Princes should spare their townsfolk any troubles that are theirs alone. Surely they must not involve the residents of the city in their own troubles."

[22–25] Lakṣmaṇa replied to Rāma as if he were Righteousness incarnate standing before his very eyes, and said, "I agree, my wise brother. We should board at once." Then, in haste, the charioteer harnessed the splendid horses to the carriage and, with his hands cupped in reverence, directed Rāma to it. But in order to confuse the townsfolk, Rāma said to the charioteer: "Board the carriage, Sumantra, and head northward. Hasten onward for a while, then circle back on the carriage. You must take care to ensure that the townsfolk do not know where I have gone."

[26–33] Upon hearing Rāma's words, the charioteer acted accordingly, and, on returning, he directed Rāma to the carriage. Rāghava boarded with all his equipment and crossed the swift-flowing, eddying Tamasā. Once across, the great-armed, majestic prince entered upon a broad pathway, a gracious one free from obstacles and the threat of dangerous beasts. When the night had brightened into dawn and the townsfolk found themselves without Rāghava, their minds were stunned, and they were paralyzed by a crushing grief. Drenched in tears of grief, they searched high and low, but to their bitter sorrow they caught not a glimpse of Rāma. For a short while they followed the track, and when it gave out, a wild despair swept over them. When the tracks of the chariot gave out, the sensible among them

turned back, thinking: "What can this mean? What are we to do? Fate has crushed us." Then all of them, with weary hearts, returned the way they had come to the city of Ayodhyā, where all good people were still in a state of shock.

Sarga 42

[1–4] Thus did the residents of the city return after following Rāma, but all their strength seemed to have gone, and they were left insensible. They then went to their own dwellings and there, surrounded by their wives and children, they all broke out in weeping, and their faces were bathed in tears. No one felt any delight or gladness. Merchants did not display their wares, no goods were set out to catch the eye. Householders prepared no meals. People felt no joy at finding something long thought lost, or in obtaining vast wealth. Mothers felt no joy at delivering a firstborn son.

[5–10] In one house after another the women wept when their husbands came home, and, in the anguish of their sorrow, they berated them with words as piercing as elephant goads: "What good are homes or wives or wealth, what good are sons or pleasures to those who have lost the sight of Rāghava? The one decent man in the world is Lakṣmaṇa, who, with Sītā, is following Rāma Kākutstha and serving him in the forest. How blessed are those streams, lakes, and lotus ponds where Kākutstha will bathe, plunging into the pure water! The woodlands and the lovely groves will adorn Kākutstha, and so will the broad-banked streams and steep-sloped mountains. Every hill or grove Rāma visits will treat him like a welcome guest and not fail to offer him hospitality.

[11–15ab] "The mountains will be crowned with many-colored blossoms and bear clusters of bouquets when Rāma comes, and out of compassion they will display for him choice fruits and flowers even out of season. They will afford him views of waterfalls as well, one after the other, and the trees on the summits will gladden Rāghava. Where Rāma goes there is nothing to fear, and no one ever comes to grief; for he is a great-armed hero and the son of Daśaratha. So let us follow Rāghava before he gets too far away from us. How pleasant the shadow of the feet of such a great master as he; for he is the one defender of this people, he their one recourse and refuge. We shall attend on Sītā, and you on Rāghava."

[15cd–19] Such were the things the townsmen's wives told their husbands. And in the anguish of their sorrow they continued: "Rāghava will see to it that you are safe and sound in the wilderness, and Sītā will do the same for us, the womenfolk. Who could find any joy in living here, where the people are filled with longing, a place so cheerless, so unpleasant and dispiriting? If, with our one defender gone and—against all that is right—the kingship should come into Kaikeyī's hands, we would have no further use for living, much less for children or riches. Kaikeyī, that disgrace to her family, renounced both her son and her husband for the sake of kingly power. Why then should she be expected to spare anyone else?

[20–24] "We will not remain in the kingdom as servants to Kaikeyī, so long as she lives, or we do. We swear it on our sons. Who could live at ease under that unrighteous, wicked woman, so heartless that she forced into exile the son of the lord of kings? For with Rāma banished, the lord of the earth will not long survive. And once Daśaratha is dead, total devastation will clearly follow. You wretched men of little merit! Better for you to mix poison and take it now. For either you follow Rāghava or you shall never be heard from again. Rāma, his wife, and Lakṣmaṇa have been treacherously banished, and all of us delivered up to Bharata like livestock to the butcher."

[25–26] Thus did the townsmen's wives lament throughout the city. They cried out in agony, as if they feared the approach of death. The women were as anguished on Rāma's account as if a son of theirs or a brother had been exiled. Desolate they lamented and madly wept, for he meant more to them, in fact, than their own sons.

Sarga 43

[1–6] Now, through the remainder of that same night, Rāma, tiger among men, traveled a great distance, mindful of his father's command. As he traveled, gracious night departed. Then, after worshiping the gracious morning twilight, he pushed on to the frontier of the realm. Drawn by his splendid horses, he proceeded swiftly—though it seemed so slow to him—observing the villages with their wide-spaced boundaries and the forests all in flower. And he heard the people who made their homes in the villages crying: "A curse upon King Daśaratha for succumbing to the power of passion! Ah! Kaikeyī is a vicious and evil woman always doing evil, a

heartless woman who has gone beyond all limits. Today she has done a heartless deed in exiling the prince to a life in the forest, so righteous a prince, so wise, compassionate, and steadfast.”

[7–11] Such were the words of the people who made their homes in the villages, and the heroic lord of Kosala heard them as he passed beyond the land of Kosala. He then crossed the Vedaśrutī, a river running with auspicious water, and continued on toward the region where Agastya lived. He traveled a very long time and then crossed the Gomatī, a chilly river flowing to the sea, its shores teeming with cows. After fording the Gomatī with his swift horses, Rāghava crossed the Syandikā River, which resounded with the cries of *haṃsas* and peacocks. Rāma pointed out to Vaidehī the land King Manu long ago bestowed upon Ikṣvāku, a rich land encircled by vassal kingdoms.

[12–15] And often the majestic bull among men would address his chariot driver in a voice like the impassioned call of the *haṃsa*, saying: “When shall I return, charioteer, and once again go hunting in the flowering forest beside the Sarayū, and be reunited with my mother and father? [jj]I so long to hunt in the forest beside the Sarayū. That is a pleasure without equal in the world, one the hosts of royal seers have always prized.” Of these and other matters Aikṣvāka addressed the charioteer in his sweet voice as he continued on his way.

Sarga 44

[1–5] After passing through the broad and lovely land of Kosala, Lakṣmaṇa’s great-armed eldest brother reached Śṛṅgaverapura. There Rāghava saw the Ganges, the heavenly river that goes by three paths, its auspicious water unclogged by weeds; a holy river frequented by seers. It was resounding with the cries of *haṃsas* and *sārasa* cranes and the calls of *cakravākas* and was swarming with dolphins, crocodiles, and snakes. As the great chariot-warrior gazed over its wave-capped eddies, he said to the charioteer Sumantra: “We shall spend the night here. There, not far from the river, is a towering *iṅgudī* tree with luxuriant flowers and shoots. Charioteer, we shall spend the night there.”

[6–10] Lakṣmaṇa and Sumantra replied, “As you wish,” and the two then turned the horses toward the *iṅgudī* tree. Upon reaching that lovely tree, Rāma, the delight of the Ikṣvākus, alighted from the carriage with his

wife and Lakṣmaṇa. Sumantra alighted as well, and, after unhitching the splendid horses, he cupped his hands in reverence and stood in attendance on Rāma at the foot of the tree. Now, the king of that region was named Guha, a friend of Rāma and precious to him as life itself. He was of the Niṣāda tribe, a powerful man and famed as their chief. He had heard that Rāma, tiger among men, had come into his realm, and accompanied by his aged ministers and kinsmen, he approached him.

[11–15] Seeing that Guha, overlord of the Niṣādas, was waiting at a distance, Rāma went out with Saumitri to meet him. Guha embraced Rāghava in anguish, and said: "This land, no less than Ayodhyā, belongs to you. What may I do for you, Rāma?" At once he had the guest-offering brought along with an assortment of choice foods and drinks, and he said: "I bid you welcome, great-armed prince. This entire land belongs to you. We are servants, you the master. Come, our kingdom is yours to rule. There is food at hand, solid, soft, and liquid, and sweet things to lick as well as comfortable beds and fodder for your horses."

[16–22] As Guha was speaking, Rāghava replied, "You honor and delight us in every way by your coming here on foot and your display of affection." He clasped him tightly in his well-shaped arms and added: "How fortunate to see you, Guha, you and your kinsmen, in good health. All is well with you, I hope, with your kingdom, your treasury, and your allies. I must, however, refuse everything you have so kindly made ready, for I am not in a position to accept. You must know that I am now a forest ascetic, dressed in *kuśa* grass, bark, and hides, subsisting on fruits and roots, and wholly devoted to righteousness. I need only fodder for the horses, nothing more. My honored friend will do me great homage with that alone. For these horses are cherished by my father, King Daśaratha, and it will be hospitality enough for me if they are well cared for."

[23–27] Guha then straightaway ordered water and fodder for the horses. "Fetch it at once," he told his men. Wearing an upper garment of barkcloth, Rāma then performed the evening *sandhyā* rites and took as his only refreshment the water Lakṣmaṇa brought himself. Afterward, as Rāma lay upon the ground, Lakṣmaṇa washed his feet and his wife's, and then withdrew, taking up a position beside the tree. Saumitri was engaged in conversation by the charioteer and Guha, who also kept vigilant watch over Rāma, his bow at the ready. And so the great prince, a man who had never

before known pain, but only pleasure, the wise and glorious Dāśarathi lay there as the night dragged slowly by.

Sarga 45

[1–7] As Lakṣmaṇa Rāghava stood there wide awake on his brother's behalf, Guha, burning with sorrow, said to him: "Here, dear boy, is a comfortable bed made ready on your behalf. Come, prince, rest in comfort upon it. My people are all accustomed to hardship; you, however, are accustomed to comfort. We will remain awake tonight to guard Kākutstha. There is no one on earth dearer to me than Rāma. I am telling the truth, and by my truth I swear it to you. Whatever hope I may have in this world for great glory, for the full acquisition of righteousness, or even wealth, I have by reason of his grace. And as for me, bow in hand and surrounded on all sides by my kinsmen, I will protect my dear friend Rāma as he lies asleep with Sītā. I have wandered the forest all my life and nothing happens here without my knowing of it. Moreover, we are prepared to withstand even a vast army of four divisions."

[8–11] Lakṣmaṇa then replied to him: "With you protecting us here, blameless Guha, with righteousness alone in view, we could have nothing to fear. But how, while Dāśarathi is lying on the ground with Sītā, could I find sleep—or any happiness in life? [kk]Look at him, Guha, resting at ease with Sītā on a bed of straw, a man whom all the gods and *asuras* could not withstand in battle. This is the only one of Daśaratha's sons to resemble him in every trait—a son obtained by means of austerities, vedic *mantras*, and all kinds of exertions.

[12–18] "With him in exile the king will not long remain alive. The earth will surely soon be widowed. The women must have cried out their last shrill cries and ceased in exhaustion. The din, I expect, has ceased in the king's palace, sir. I have little hope that Kausalyā, the king, or my own mother will even live out this night. And even if my mother should live on to look after Śatrughna, Kausalyā's sorrow is such that she, who bore this one heroic son, will perish. Caught up in the king's calamity, the city, which once brought gladness with its pleasant aspect, will perish with all its loyal people. And my father, who never got the wish that just eluded him and never installed Rāma in the kingship, will perish as well. And when that

moment comes and they purify the lord of the earth with all the rites for the dead, they will have attained their goal.

[19–24] “Then they will stroll at their ease through my father’s capital, through its lovely squares and well-ordered thoroughfares; with all its mansions and palaces, with the fairest courtesans to lend it beauty, with its teeming chariots, horses, elephants; resounding with the sound of musical instruments, stocked with every luxury, thronging with delighted and prosperous people, dotted with orchards and gardens, a place of crowded fairs and festivals. If only we might return to Ayodhyā when our stay in the forest is over to find him well and his promise fulfilled.” And so the night passed with the great prince standing there mourning, racked with sorrow. And while the good prince was uttering these forthright words, Guha wept in deep compassion, crushed by the calamity and tormented by heartache, like an elephant tormented by a raging fever.

Sarga 46

[1–5] When the night had brightened into dawn, broad-chested, glorious Rāma spoke to Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri of auspicious marks: “The sun, bringer of light, is rising and the blessed night has gone. And there, dear boy, the jet-black bird, the *kokila*, is calling. You can hear the sound of peacocks crying in the forest. Let us cross the Jāhnavī, dear Lakṣmaṇa, the swift river flowing to the sea.” Heeding Rāma’s words, Saumitri, the delight of his friends, took leave of Guha and the charioteer and then stood before his brother. [11]Then, after strapping on their quivers and buckling on their swords, the two Rāghavas took up their bows and went with Sītā down to the Ganges.

[6–10] Their charioteer now deferentially approached righteous Rāma and, cupping his hands in reverence, asked, “What then am I to do?” “Go back,” Rāma replied. “You have done enough for me. We shall relinquish the carriage and proceed to the great forest on foot.” Finding himself dismissed, the charioteer Sumantra was anguished and replied to Rāma Aikṣvāka, tiger among men: “There is no one in the world who could ever have expected this, your having to live in the forest with your brother and wife, like some common man. I guess there is no reward for chastity or vedic study, for lenience, or uprightness, if such a calamity has befallen you.

[11–15] “Living in the forest with Vaidehī and your brother, mighty Rāghava, you will achieve as high an end as if you had conquered the three worlds. But surely we are lost, Rāma, even you have deceived us. For we must come under the power of the evil Kaikeyī, and only sorrow will be our lot.” And as the charioteer Sumantra was speaking in this way to the prince, who was precious to him as life, he gazed at Rāma, who was so far from home and was racked with sorrow. For a long while he wept. When his tears dried, the charioteer sipped water, and when he was thus purified, Rāma addressed him gently but repeatedly, telling him: “I do not know of any friend the Ikṣvākus have to equal you. It is you who must see to it that King Daśaratha not grieve for me.

[16–19] “The lord of the world is aged, his heart has been crushed by grief, and a heavy burden of desire weighs him down. That is why I tell you this: whatever orders the great lord of the earth may give in his desire to please Kaikeyī must be obeyed without demur. For it is to this end that the lords of men take up the rule of kingdoms, that their will may never be opposed in anything they require. So you must take care, Sumantra, that the great king’s displeasure is not provoked and that he does not languish under sorrow.

[20–24] “The king has never known sorrow before; he is aged, noble, and self-controlled. First do obeisance to him and then address him in my name as follows: ‘I do not grieve at all, nor do Lakṣmaṇa and Maithilī, that we have been cast out of Ayodhyā or that we must live in the forest. Once the fourteen years have passed, we will come back home, and you shall look upon each of us again, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, and me.’ After speaking to the king, Sumantra, you must inquire of Kaikeyī and all the other queens after their health, each one in turn. And tell Kausalyā for me that Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, and I, her noble son, send her respectful greetings.

[25–28] “Then you must say to the great king: ‘You must send for Bharata at once. And as soon as Bharata returns he must be installed in office with the approval of the kings. Once you have taken Bharata in your arms and consecrated him as prince regent, sorrow for our suffering will no longer oppress you.’ And you must tell this to Bharata: ‘You are to treat your mothers—all of them without distinction—exactly as you treat the king. Just as you draw no distinction between Kaikeyī and Sumitrā, so you must draw none at all with regard to Queen Kausalyā, my mother.’ ”

[29–35] Although he was stricken with grief at being sent back by Rāma, Sumantra listened attentively to everything he said and then affectionately replied to Kākutstha: “If, emboldened by my affection, I do not speak as a subordinate should, attribute it to my deep devotion and forgive me for what I say. How shall I return without you, dear Rāma, to a city that, at parting from you, went mad with such grief as one feels for a son? Think how the people were, merely seeing Rāma aboard my carriage. [mm]When the city sees my carriage with Rāma gone, it will fall to pieces. The city will be desolated when it sees the carriage empty. It would be as if, out of its whole army only a single charioteer survived, while all its brave warriors were slain in battle. Even when, back then, you still stood before them, the people felt sick at heart just to imagine you, in their mind’s eye, living far away. The cry of anguish the townsfolk raised when you set forth will be increased a hundredfold when they observe me alone in the carriage.

[36–40] “And what am I to tell the queen? ‘I have taken your son to your brother’s family, so do not agonize?’ Would I not have to say something like this, untruthful as it is? For how can I tell the truth when it is so painful? These splendid horses, it is true, respond to my command, but they are used to drawing you and your kinsmen. How will they draw the carriage when you are not in it? If, despite my pleading, you insist on leaving me, I will drive the carriage into a blazing fire the moment you abandon me. There will be creatures in the forest that will disturb your austerities, Rāghava, and I could chase them off with the carriage.

[41–45] “Thanks to you I have known the joy of tending your carriage, and I hope and pray that thanks to you I may also know the joy of life in the forest. Please be gracious, I wish to wait upon you in the wilderness. My one wish is to have the pleasure of hearing you say, ‘Wait upon me.’ And while I am living in the forest I will obey you with bowed head. I am ready to give up everything, Ayodhyā and even the world of the gods itself. I cannot in any case enter Ayodhyā without you, any more than a man of evil conduct can gain entrance to the capital of great Indra. And the horses too, heroic Rāma, will attain their highest destiny if they can render you any service while you live in the forest.

[46–48] “My fondest wish is that, when your stay in the forest has come to an end, I may convey you back to the city in this very same carriage. In your company the fourteen years in the forest will pass like so many

minutes, otherwise, they will feel like so many centuries. You have always cherished your servants, and I am a devoted servant simply following the path his master's son has taken, only following the proper course. Please, do not abandon me."

[49–54] As the desolate Sumantra was begging him, over and over, in every way he knew, Rāma, who always felt compassion for his servants, gave this reply: "I know the profound devotion you bear me, and how you cherish your master. But you must hear the reason I have for sending you back to the city. When my younger mother Kaikeyī sees that you have returned to the city, she will be convinced I have truly gone to the forest. And if the queen is satisfied that I have gone to live in the forest, she will no longer harbor suspicions that the righteous king has spoken falsely. This is my first consideration—that my younger mother should gain the kingdom for her son, and that it may thrive under Bharata's protection. As a kindness to me and to the king, you must go back to the city with the carriage and faithfully deliver each and every message imparted to you."

[55–59] When Rāma had thus addressed these words to the charioteer, he comforted him again and again. Then, in a manful and purposeful tone, he addressed Guha, saying: "I will mat my hair and then depart. Please fetch me some sap of the banyan tree." Guha at once brought the sap to the prince, and Rāma matted his own and Lakṣmaṇa's hair with it. And as the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa stood there dressed in barkcloth and bearing a crown of matted hair, they resembled a pair of seers. Having entered with Lakṣmaṇa upon the way of forest hermits and adopted their vow, Rāma said to his friend Guha: "Never neglect your army, Guha, nor your treasury, stronghold, or populace. For nothing is deemed as hard to preserve as the position of a king."

[60–64] The delight of the Ikṣvākus then dismissed Guha and with determination departed swiftly with his wife and Lakṣmaṇa. Now, at the riverbank, the delight of the Ikṣvākus spied a boat. Eager to cross the swift-flowing Ganges, he said this to Lakṣmaṇa: "You must carefully board the boat that is standing ready, tiger among men, after which you must take the hand of virtuous Sītā and help her board." Upon hearing his brother's command and not actually opposing it, the self-controlled prince first helped Maithilī aboard and then boarded himself. Only then did Lakṣmaṇa's

eldest brother, blazing with energy, board himself, followed by some of Guha's kinsmen, at the urging of the overlord of the Niṣādas.

[65–69] After bidding farewell to Sumantra, Guha, and his army, Rāma took his seat in the boat and urged on the boatmen. They in turn urged on the boat, which, guided by the helmsman and propelled by the rush of their strong oars, moved swiftly out across the water. When they reached the middle of the Bhāgīrathī, faultless Vaidehī cupped her hands in reverence and addressed the river with these words: "Here is the son of the great king, wise Daśaratha. O Ganges, please let him carry out his orders under your protection. After living in the woodlands a full fourteen years, may he return once again with his brother and me.

[70–74] "And then, O blessed goddess Ganges, when I have come back safely, I will sacrifice to you in gladness for making all my wishes come true. O goddess, you are the river that goes by three paths; you behold the world of Brahmā and also appear in our world as the wife of the god of the ocean. I pay you homage, goddess, I sing your praises, lovely one. When the tiger among men has safely returned and secured the kingship, I will give the brahmans a hundred thousand cows, garments, and exquisite food in hopes of pleasing you." Addressing the Ganges in this fashion, the faultless and courteous Sītā soon reached the southern bank.

[75–79] When they reached the shore, the bull among men, slayer of his foes, left the boat and prepared to set out with his brother and Vaidehī. The great-armed prince said to his brother, the delight of Sumitrā: "Go in front, Saumitri, let Sītā follow behind you. I shall go last, to protect you and Sītā. But all the same, today Vaidehī will come to know the pain of life in the forest." Now, as Rāma swiftly reached the further shore of the Ganges, Sumantra had watched continuously, but when the distance grew too great, he turned his gaze away, and in shock and misery he shed bitter tears. Meanwhile, on the further bank the brothers killed four large animals—a boar, a nilgai, a chital, and a great black antelope. Famished, they ate the meat hurriedly, and at sunset made for a tree beneath which they could camp.

Sarga 47

[1–4] Once they reached the tree, Rāma, the most pleasing of men, performed the evening *sandhyā* rites and then said to Lakṣmaṇa: "This is

the first night we shall spend outside our country without Sumantra, but please, do not be sad about it. From now on we must remain constantly vigilant at night, Lakṣmaṇa, for the safety and well-being of Sītā depends on the two of us. We shall have to spend this night as best we can, Saumitri. We shall have to settle down upon the ground itself strewn only with what we gather for ourselves."

[5–10] Later, as Rāma, a prince accustomed to a sumptuous bed, lay on the ground he began to talk with Saumitri, and these were the heartfelt words he spoke: "Surely, Lakṣmaṇa, the great king is sleeping most miserably tonight while Kaikeyī must be content since her desires have been satisfied. But is it not possible that Queen Kaikeyī, when she sees Bharata back home again, might take the great king's life, for the sake of his kingship? And being old, with no one to protect him and parted from me, what will he do? For he is consumed with desire and so completely under the control of Kaikeyī. Reflecting on this calamity and the fickleness of the king's mind, I have come to the conclusion that the urgings of desire far outweigh both statecraft and righteousness. For what man, even a fool, would forsake his own obedient son on account of a woman, as Father forsook me, Lakṣmaṇa?

[11–15] "Kaikeyī's son, Bharata, and his wife must indeed be joyful. Like an emperor, he will have the happy land of Kosala all to himself. Indeed, with Father well on in years and me withdrawn to the wilderness, he will be the sole ruler of the entire kingdom. Whoever forsakes righteousness and statecraft and follows the urgings of desire will soon come to grief, just like King Daśaratha. I am convinced, dear brother, that Kaikeyī came among us just to bring about Daśaratha's death, my banishment, and Bharata's accession to the kingship. Is it not possible that even now, in the flush of her good fortune, Kaikeyī may be tormenting Kausalyā and Sumitrā on my account?

[16–20] "May Queen Sumitrā never live in sorrow on my account. You must go straight back from here to Ayodhyā in the morning, Lakṣmaṇa. I shall go on alone with Sītā to the Daṇḍakas, and you will be there to protect Kausalyā, who is now without a protector. For Kaikeyī is petty, and in her hatred she may do something reckless. And you must commit my mother to the care of Bharata, who knows what is right. It must be that in some previous birth my mother separated women from their sons, Saumitri, and

so this has befallen her. And now Kausalyā, who nurtured me long and raised me with great difficulty, has been separated from me at the very moment of her reward for that. Damn me!

[21–26] "May no one who parts her hair ever bear such a son, Saumitri, since I have given my mother grief without end. Lakṣmaṇa, I think even her *sārikā*, her pet mynah, is a greater source of joy than I; for that bird at least will be there to cry out, 'O Parrot, bite the enemy's foot.' What good am I, tamer of your foes, a son who does nothing to help her as she grieves in her misfortune? She might as well be childless. Bereft of me, my unfortunate mother, Kausalyā, has been plunged into a sea of grief and lies there racked by bitter sorrow. In my rage, Lakṣmaṇa, all by myself I could overpower Ayodhyā or even the whole earth with my arrows. But truly valor is useless. I fear the danger of unrighteousness, blameless Lakṣmaṇa, and I fear what other people might say. That is why I do not have myself consecrated at once."

[27–33] These and many other pitiful words of lamentation did Rāma utter that night, in that desolate place. Then he fell silent, his face bathed in tears. When Rāma had ceased his lamentation and lay like a damped-down fire or a sea becalmed, Lakṣmaṇa tried to comfort him. "It is true, Rāma, best of warriors, that the city of Ayodhyā will be gloomy tonight now that you have departed, like the night when the moon is gone. But it is to no avail, Rāma, that you torment yourself like this. You are only disheartening Sītā, and me too, bull among men. Neither Sītā nor I could live an instant without you, Rāghava. We would be like a pair of fish plucked out of the water. No, without you, slayer of enemies, I would not care to see Father now, nor Śatrughna, Sumitrā, or heaven itself." Rāghava, slayer of enemies, listened to Lakṣmaṇa's earnest words, and at last, recognizing it as the way of righteousness, and out of respect, he granted him permission to live in the forest for all the years to come.

Sarga 48

[1–7] After passing the gracious night under the great tree, they set out from there when the bright sun rose. Plunging into the great forest, they headed toward the place where Bhāgīrathī, the river Ganges, joins the Yamunā. And here and there, as the glorious party made their way, they saw different types of landscape and charming regions such as they had never seen

before. Rāma took the safest path, observing the different sorts of trees, and as day was drawing to a close he spoke to Saumitri: “Look at the smoke, holy Agni’s banner, rising above Prayāga. I think the sage Bharadvāja must live nearby, Saumitri. Surely we have reached the confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā, for you can hear the sound of water dashing against water. Here are logs hewn by foresters, Bharadvāja’s dependents, and there you can see the different sorts of trees around his ashram.”

[8–10] The brothers went on at an easy pace bearing their bows, and as the sun, maker of day, was hanging low they came to the sage’s abode at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā. The deer and birds were frightened as Rāma entered the ashram. Proceeding along the path, he soon came upon Bharadvāja. With Sītā following behind, the mighty brothers arrived at the ashram and stood some distance off, eager to meet the sage.

[11–15] The illustrious sage soon completed the *agnihotra* rite, and the moment Rāma saw him, he cupped his hands in reverence and did obeisance to him together with Saumitri and Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa’s elder brother then identified himself to him: “Holy one, we are Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, sons of Daśaratha. And this is my wife, Vaidehī, the lovely daughter of Janaka. The faultless woman is following me to the desolate groves of asceticism. When our father banished me, Saumitri, my beloved younger brother, firm in his vows, accompanied me to the forest. On my father’s orders, holy one, we are to enter a grove of asceticism. There we will strictly follow the way of righteousness, living only on roots and fruits.”

[16–20] Upon hearing the words of the wise prince, the righteous sage presented him with a cow, the guest-offering, and water. Then, sitting with deer and birds and sages all around him, the sage welcomed his visitor Rāma and offered him hospitality. Rāghava accepted his hospitality and took a seat, and then Bharadvāja addressed him with these righteous words: “So at last I see that you have come here, Kākutstha. I have heard about this, about your unwarranted exile. This is an isolated spot, here at the confluence of the two great rivers. It is a sacred and delightful place, and you should stay here comfortably.”

[21–23] Addressed in this fashion by Bharadvāja, Rāma Rāghava replied with fitting words, for the welfare of all was his chief concern: “Holy one, not far from here live people of both town and province, and they will come to visit Vaidehī and me. For this reason I cannot consent to our living here.

Please think of some good site for an ashram, holy one, in a secluded place, one that will delight Janaka's daughter Vaidehī, who deserves every comfort."

[24–30] The great sage Bharadvāja, hearing Rāghava's fitting words, answered him in a way that carried conviction: "Some twenty miles from here, my son, is a mountain where you may live. It is a sacred place frequented by great seers and with a lovely view on all sides. Langurs range about it, and it is frequented by monkeys and apes. It is known as Citrakūṭa, and it resembles Mount Gandhamādana. As long as a man beholds the peaks of Citrakūṭa, he meditates on blessed things and does not turn his mind to evil. Many seers have passed their hundred autumns there and, by means of their austerities, have ascended to heaven with skull-white heads. It is an isolated place to live, one that I think will please you; or you may live here with me, Rāma, for the duration of your stay in the forest." Thus, Bharadvāja, wise in the ways of righteousness, received his dear guest Rāma, his wife, and brother, and fulfilled their every desire.

[31–36] And when holy night came on, Rāma stayed at Prayāga in the company of the great seer, conversing about various matters. But when night had brightened into dawn, the tiger among men came before Bharadvāja, a sage of brilliant powers, and said: "Last night, holy one, we made our dwelling here, in your ashram. Now, truthful sage, please give us leave to depart." Now that they had passed the night, Bharadvāja replied: "Go, then, to Citrakūṭa, a place rich in honey, roots, and fruits. There on every side you will see herds of elephants, Rāghava, and herds of deer that range through the expanses of forest. You should establish your ashram when you reach that auspicious mountain resounding with the calls of *koyaṣṭi* and *kokila* and charming with the deer and many elephants in rut."

Sarga 49

[1–6cd] After spending the night there, the princes, tamers of their foes, paid obeisance to the great seer and proceeded off toward the mountain. As the great sage observed them setting out, he followed behind, as a father would follow his children, and he began to speak: "Now, when you reach the swift-flowing Kālindī, the daughter of the sun, make a raft there and cross the river. There you will come upon a great banyan tree with lush green leaves, called Śyāma. It has grown dense with its many trunks and is

frequented by perfected beings. About two miles beyond it, Rāma, you will see a dark thicket, a mixture of *palāśa* and *badarī* trees and Yamunā bamboo. That is the way to Citrakūṭa. I have traveled it many times, for it is pleasant and easy, and quite safe from forest fires."

[6ef–10] After showing them the way, the great seer turned back. When the sage had gone, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa, "How fortunate we are, Saumitri, that the sage has shown us such compassion." Conversing in this fashion, the brothers, tigers among men, proceeded in high spirits to the Kālindī River, placing Sītā in front of them. They lashed together logs to fashion a large raft, and Lakṣmaṇa cut some wood to make a comfortable seat for Sītā. Next, Rāma Dāśarathi helped her to board the raft, and as he did so she was a bit embarrassed, his beloved wife, a woman as marvelous as the goddess Śrī.

[11–15] Then on the raft they crossed the Yamunā, daughter of the sun, a swift-flowing, wave-wreathed river with trees growing thick along her banks. Once across they abandoned the raft, and, setting out from the Yamunā forest, they reached the cool, green-leafed banyan tree called Śyāma. Sītā walked respectfully around the tree with her hands cupped in reverence and said, "O that I may see Kausalyā again and illustrious Sumitrā." Proceeding some two miles farther, the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa killed many animals such as are permissible to consume and ate them in a grove by the Yamunā. They then passed the time pleasantly in that lovely grove resounding with flocks of peacocks and teeming with elephants and monkeys. Then, no longer despondent, they repaired to a spot where the riverbank was level and found a suitable place to pass the night.

Sarga 50

[1–5] When night had passed, Lakṣmaṇa dozed off, but straightaway the delight of the Raghus gently roused him, saying: "Saumitri, listen to the sweet sounds the forest creatures are making. Let us be off, slayer of enemies, it is time for us to depart." Even though his brother had roused him the very moment he was dozing off, Lakṣmaṇa at once shook off his sleep and lassitude as well as the nagging fatigue of travel. They all rose and sipped the auspicious water of the river and then set out on the path to Citrakūṭa that had been described by the seer. As Rāma set out in the early morning with Saumitri, he began to speak to lotus-eyed Sītā, saying:

[6–10] “Look, Vaidehī, the *kiṃśuka* trees are in full blossom now that winter is past. Garlanded with their red blossoms, they almost seem to be on fire. And look at the *bhallātaka* trees in bloom, untended by man, how they are bent over with fruits and leaves. I know I shall be able to live here. Look as well at the honeycombs, Lakṣmaṇa, amassed by honeybees on one tree after another. They hang down as large as buckets. Over here a *natyūha* is calling, and in answer to it a peacock cries through delightful stretches of forest richly carpeted with flowers. And see, there is Citrakūṭa, the mountain there with the towering peak, teeming with herds of elephants and echoing with flocks of birds.”

[11–15] And so the brothers and Sītā proceeded on foot and reached the delightful mountain, charming Citrakūṭa. And upon reaching the mountain, where birds of every description came flocking, he said: “This will be our dwelling for now. We shall enjoy ourselves here, dear brother. Fetch wood, dear Lakṣmaṇa, firm, fine wood, and build us a dwelling, for my heart is set on living here.” Upon hearing his words, Saumitri, tamer of his foes, went and brought different kinds of trees and built a leaf hut. Then Rāma addressed him, his single-mindedly obedient brother, once again: “Bring the flesh of a black antelope, and we shall offer sacrifice to our home.”

[16–22] Powerful Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri then killed a black deer, one fit for sacrifice, and then cast it into a well-kindled fire. When Lakṣmaṇa saw that it was cooked, well broiled, its bleeding staunched, he said to Rāghava, tiger among men: “The black deer has been roasted black, with all its limbs intact. You, who are skilled, may now sacrifice it to the gods, my godlike brother.” Rāma bathed and then, intently and with expertise, he intoned the *mantras* most skillfully and made a plentiful offering for averting evil. Then, just as the hosts of the gods enter their assembly hall Sudharmā, together they entered that charming, leaf-thatched hut, well built in a suitable spot protected from the wind, to take up their dwelling. It was a splendid forest too, teeming with many kinds of birds and beasts, where trees grew dense with brilliant clusters of flowers and the cries of wild animals echoed. And they enjoyed themselves in perfect happiness there—all the while controlling their senses. Now that Rāma had arrived at pleasant Mount Citrakūṭa and the river Mālyavatī, with its gentle fords where beasts and birds would congregate, he felt a gladness and delight that made him forget the sorrow of exile from his city.

Sarga 51

[1–5] Meanwhile, racked with bitter sorrow, Guha had stood talking for a long time with Sumantra until Rāma had reached the southern shore, and then he returned home. Given leave to depart, Sumantra harnessed the splendid horses, and, in profound dejection, proceeded directly to the city of Ayodhyā. Fragrant forests came into view, streams and ponds, then villages and cities, but he sped past them all. Then, on the third day, at dusk, the charioteer reached Ayodhyā, and it was a joyless sight that met his eyes. The city was silent and seemed deserted, and as he looked at it in deep dejection, Sumantra was overcome by a rush of grief and anxiously brooded:

[6–9] "Can it be that the entire city, with its elephants and horses, its people, and their lord, has been consumed by the fire of grief, in sorrow for Rāma's suffering?" Lost in these anxious thoughts, the charioteer hurriedly entered. But as the charioteer Sumantra was advancing, men began to run toward him by the hundreds and thousands, asking, "Where is Rāma?" He told them: "I took leave of Rāghava at the Ganges. The great and righteous prince dismissed me, and so I returned. The three of them have crossed the river." When the people heard this, their faces filled with tears, they sighed, "Alas!" and cried out, "Alas, Rāma!"

[10–15] And he heard what they said as they gathered in various groups: "Now we are lost indeed, for we shall never see Rāghava here again." "We will never again meet righteous Rāma at feasts or sacrifices, at weddings or great assemblies, since he will not be there." "Like a father Rāma watched over the city, pondering what was advantageous for the people, what would please them and bring them happiness." Along the row of inner shops he heard the lamentation of the women where they sat by their windows, suffering with grief for Rāma. In the middle of the royal highway, Sumantra, hiding his face, went straight to Daśaratha's palace. Alighting swiftly from the carriage, he entered the king's compound and passed in turn through the seven courtyards, which were crowded with men of importance.

[16–20] Here and there in the mansions he could hear the hushed comments of Daśaratha's wives, who were grief-stricken over Rāma, as they whispered: "The charioteer went away with Rāma and now has come back without him. What can he possibly say to Kausalyā in her grief? As

hard as it is for Kausalyā to live, it must be, I guess, no easier to die, if she is still alive despite her son's departure." Hearing the talk of the king's wives—and it was all too true—he quickly entered the palace that seemed engulfed in flames of grief. He made his way through the eighth courtyard, and there in the pale white chamber he saw the king desolate and anguished, tormented with grief for his son.

[21–27] Sumantra advanced to where the lord of men was sitting. Doing obeisance to him, he delivered Rāma's message just as it had been told to him. The king listened in silence, and then, his mind reeling, he fell to the ground in a faint, overwhelmed by grief for Rāma. Pain swept over the women of the inner apartments as the lord of the earth grew faint. And as the king fell to the floor, they lifted up their arms and wailed. With Sumitrā's help, Kausalyā raised up her fallen lord, and then she said: "Illustrious king, here, returned from his sojourn in the forest, is the messenger come from the prince who has done the impossible. Why do you not address him? Or are you at last ashamed, Rāghava, of the calamitous thing you have done? Stand up, and set things right. Grief will render you no aid. Kaikeyī, for fear of whom you dare not ask the charioteer about Rāma, is not here, my lord; you may speak freely."

[28–30] When Kausalyā had spoken in this fashion to the great king, she suddenly fell to the floor, sick with grief, the rest of her words drowned in her tears. When the women saw Kausalyā fall lamenting to the ground and looked at their lord, they all broke out in shrill weeping. And as the din arising from the inner apartments reached them, men young and old alike and all the women broke out in weeping, so that once again every quarter of the city was thrown into confusion.

Sarga 52

[1–5] When the king had revived and recovered from his faint, he summoned the charioteer to learn what had happened to Rāma. The charioteer approached in desolation, his body coated with dust, his face bathed in tears—an old man deeply suffering like an elephant newly captured, like an elephant bull heaving sighs, pensive and beside himself with grief. The king addressed him in deep anguish: "Where is my righteous son living? Must he resort to the foot of a tree? Rāghava has known every comfort, charioteer, what must he now eat? How can the son

of the guardian of the earth lie down upon the earth like some helpless wretch? Foot soldiers, chariots, and elephants used to follow Rāma wherever he went. How can he have gone off to live in the desolate forest?

[6–9] "Wild animals prowl through it, black snakes infest it. How can the two young men and Vaidehī have gone to the forest? How could the princes and poor Sītā, so delicate a young woman, have left the carriage, Sumantra, and proceeded on foot? You at least have found fulfillment, charioteer, in seeing my sons entering the forest as the two Aśvins might enter onto Mount Mandara. What were Rāma's words, Sumantra, what were Lakṣmaṇa's and Maithilī's when they reached the forest? Tell me, charioteer, where Rāma sat, where he slept, what he ate."

[10–17] Pressed in this way by the lord of men, Sumantra the charioteer answered the king and in a sob-choked, breaking voice said: "Rāghava cupped his hands in reverence and bowed his head, great king, and in perfect keeping with righteousness he said to me: 'Charioteer, in my name you must fall at the feet of my great and celebrated father, and pay him the homage he deserves. In my name, charioteer, you must ask the women of the inner apartments after their health, all of them without exception, and do obeisance to them according to rank. And you must ask my mother, Kausalyā, after her welfare and do obeisance to her, telling her, "My lady, ever venerate the feet of my lord as if he were a god." Ask Bharata after his welfare and tell him in my name, "You must observe proper conduct toward each and every one of our mothers." And tell him further, the great-armed prince, the delight of the Ikṣvāku House, "When you become prince regent, you must defer to Father, who remains the king."' So glorious Rāma spoke to me, great king, and as he did the tears rolled in a flood from his eyes as red as lotuses.

[18–22] "But Lakṣmaṇa was furious, and heaving a sigh he said: 'For what crime has the prince been exiled? Whether it was the granting of a boon or some other selfish motive that led to Rāma's banishment, in any event an evil thing has been done. I can see no reason whatsoever for Rāma to have been abandoned. The banishment of Rāghava was a rash act, a perverse act of folly, that must provoke protest. I for one can no longer regard the great king as my father. Rāghava shall now be brother, father, master, and every kinsman to me. How could anyone in the world feel

loyalty to you after doing such a thing, after abandoning the prince, whom all the world loves and who is devoted to the welfare of all the world?'

[23–26] "Poor Jānakī stood heaving sighs, great king, motionless and oblivious as though a spirit possessed her. The illustrious princess, who has never known adversity before, only wept in her sorrow and could not speak to me at all. She gazed up at her husband and her mouth went dry, and as she watched me leaving she suddenly burst into tears. That is just how it was—Rāma standing still, his hands cupped in reverence, his face bathed in tears, protected by Lakṣmaṇa's arms; and poor Sītā weeping as she gazed at the king's carriage, and at me."

Sarga 53

[1–5] "Now, as I was about to return, the horses would not take the road, and they shed hot tears as Rāma set out to the forest. I cupped my hands in reverence to both princes and boarded the carriage, ready to set out despite the sorrow I felt for them. [nn]But I waited the whole day there with Guha in hopes that Rāma might yet send word for me. Throughout your realm, great king, even the trees are tormented by Rāma's calamity; they have wilted, flower, bud, and branch. No creatures are moving about, no beasts stirring forth. The forest is overcome with grief for Rāma, and its murmur has been stilled.

[6–13] "In the lotus ponds the blossoms have closed their petals, lord of men, and the waters have grown turbid. The lotuses have withered, and the fish and sky-going birds have hidden themselves. Blossoms that grow in water and flowers that grow on land now no longer look beautiful, while fruits have little of the fragrance they once possessed. No one welcomed me as I entered Ayodhyā. The men, not seeing Rāma, heaved sighs incessantly. From mansions, many-storied buildings, and palaces the women observed the carriage come, and they raised cries of woe, tormented at losing the sight of Rāma. [oo]More anguished than ever before, the ladies looked at one another dimly, through large and once-bright eyes that rushing tears had overwhelmed. I could detect no disparity in the anguish felt by friends, enemies, or neutrals. The people have lost all delight, the elephants and horses are desolate, the city languishes amid the cries of anguish and reverberates with sighs, joyless and tormented by Rāma's banishment. It

almost seems to me, your majesty, as if Ayodhyā, like Kausalyā herself, had been bereft of her only son.”

[14–20] When he heard the charioteer’s report, the king replied in a most desolate, sob-choked voice: “Kaikeyī, a woman of evil family and evil designs, forced me, and I failed to seek the advice of elders skilled in counsel. I failed to take counsel with my friends, my ministers, and wise brahmans. It was on my own, in delusion, for the sake of a woman, that I did the rash thing I have done. Or, on the other hand, charioteer, this great calamity was something destined to be, that had to come about somehow, in order to bring ruin upon this House. If I have ever done you a kind deed, charioteer, you must bring Rāma back to me at once—and hurry, for my life depends upon it. If only my express command might even yet make Rāghava turn back! I shall not be able to live another moment without Rāma. But then, my great-armed son must have traveled far away by now. So please, place me on the carriage and swiftly bring me within sight of Rāma.

[21–26] “Where is Lakṣmaṇa’s eldest brother, the great bowman with pearly teeth? Oh please, I must see him and Sītā if I am to live. If I cannot see Rāma, those coppery eyes of his, those great arms, the jeweled earrings that he wears, I shall go to the abode of Yama, the god of death. What greater sorrow can there be than this, that in the state to which I am reduced, Rāghava, the delight of the Ikṣvākus, I cannot see Rāma here before me. Alas, Rāma! Alas, younger brother of Rāma! Alas, poor Vaidehī! You did not know I would die helplessly in sorrow. Too wide, my lady, is this ocean of grief, too wide for me to cross alive. What misfortune to be denied the chance to see them, Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa, here and now when I so need to see them.” Thus did the glorious king lament until, suddenly, he fell back upon the couch in a faint. And as the king lamented in this fashion over Rāma, before his mind went dark, the queen, Rāma’s mother, hearing his words that were doubly piteous, was once again seized with terror.

Sarga 54

[1–3] Trembling constantly as though a spirit possessed her, Kausalyā spoke to the charioteer from the ground where she lay almost lifeless: “Take me where Kākutstha is, and Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa. I cannot bear to live here

without them for even an instant. Quickly turn the chariot around and take me as well to the Daṇḍakas. If I cannot go after them, I too will go to the abode of Yama."

[4–10] The charioteer cupped his hands in reverence, and, in a breaking voice choked by rushing sobs, he tried to comfort the queen: "Put away your grief and confusion, and your consternation over this sorrowful event. Rāghava himself is living in the forest free from any regrets. Lakṣmaṇa too, by humbly serving Rāma in the forest, with such self-restraint and sense of duty, is winning the heavenly world. Sītā is making her dwelling in the forest, desolate place though it is, as if it were her home. She has entrusted her heart to Rāma and is full of confidence and unafraid. I did not perceive that Vaidehī felt even the slightest despondency. She seemed to me almost accustomed to the hardships of exile. Sītā takes the same delight in the desolate forests that she used to take when going out to the city gardens. Even though she is in the desolate forest, the delightful Sītā with her face like the full moon is enjoying herself like a young girl, delighting in Rāma and not at all despondent.

[11–15] "For her heart belongs to him, and her life depends on him. Ayodhyā itself, with Rāma gone, would be far more of a wilderness to her. On the road Vaidehī inquires about the villages and cities she sees, the courses of rivers, and the different kinds of trees. No journey or gusting wind, no distress or scorching heat can dim Vaidehī's moonbeam radiance. Sweet Vaidehī's face has not suffered any change; it still resembles the hundred-petaled lotus, still looks as radiant as the full moon. Her feet, radiant as lotus cups, remain as rosy as liquid lac even now, when she must do without it.

[16–20] "Even now, when she has cast off her jewelry out of love for him, beautiful Vaidehī moves as gracefully as if she were dancing with anklets sounding. In the forest when she spies an elephant, a lion, or tiger, she slips within Rāma's arms and so does not take fright. You must not grieve for them or for yourself; you must not grieve for the lord of the people. For theirs are exploits the world will keep alive in memory forever. They have shaken off their grief, and their hearts are joyful. They are keeping firmly to the path the great seers have taken; they find delight in the forest, eating forest fruits and making good their father's promise." Yet, for all the charioteer's attempts to restrain the queen with such well-

reasoned words, she was still tormented with grief for her child and would not stop moaning, “Rāghava! My darling! My son!”

Sarga 55

[1–5] Kausalyā wept for Rāma, the most pleasing of men, gone to the forest in his adherence to righteousness. And she said in bitter anguish to her husband: “Your fame is great, widespread throughout the three worlds—Rāghava is compassionate, they say, generous and kind spoken. How then, best of kings, could your two sons—together with Sītā—have been made to suffer so? Raised in comfort, how will they both endure the sufferings of the forest? How indeed will Maithilī, a woman in the bloom of youth, so delicate and used to comfort, endure the heat and the cold? Large-eyed Sītā has always had savory dishes to eat, exquisitely seasoned. How will she eat the food of the forest, plain rice growing wild?

[6–10] “The faultless woman has always heard agreeable sounds, the sounds of singing and musical instruments. How will she bear hearing the fearsome roaring of flesh-eating lions? Where must my mighty, great-armed son, who resembles the flagstaff of great Indra, be sleeping, resting his head upon his arm so like an iron beam? When will I see Rāma’s handsome face again, lotus-hued, with hair so thick, his eyes like lotus petals, his breath scented like a lotus? Surely my heart is made of adamant; how otherwise, with him gone from my sight, would it not shatter into a thousand fragments? Even if Rāghava should return in the fifteenth year, he would spurn both the kingship and the treasury, since Bharata will have possessed them.

[11–15] “Once a younger brother has enjoyed the kingship like this, why, lord of the people, would the eldest and best brother not disdain it? A tiger will not eat the food another beast has fed upon. In the same way the tiger among men will scorn what another has tasted. One does not reuse in a sacrifice the oblation, clarified butter, rice cakes, *kuśa* grass, or posts of *khadira* wood, once they have rendered their service. Similarly, this kingdom will have no value for Rāma. It will have been consumed, like a cup of wine drained to the lees, like a sacrifice when the *soma* has been poured out. Rāghava will not suffer an insult of this sort, any more than a powerful tiger suffers having its tail pulled.

[16–21] “He is such a man, a bull among men, with the power of a lion and the glance of a bull. Yet his own father has destroyed him, just as a fish consumes its own offspring. If only you had kept to the age-old way of righteousness followed by the twice-born and set down in the *śāstras*, before you exiled a son so earnest in righteousness. A woman’s first recourse is her husband, your majesty, her second is her son, her third her kinsmen. She has no fourth in this world. But you are no recourse for me, and Rāma is off in the forest. I do not want to go to the forest; you have totally destroyed me. You have destroyed this kingship and this kingdom, and all the people of the city; you have destroyed your counselors and yourself, destroyed me and my son. Your son and your wife should be delighted now.” As he listened to the harrowing words she uttered, the king grew faint, overcome with sorrow. He plumbed the very depths of his grief, and there a memory was revived of something evil he once did.

Sarga 56

[1–6] Such were the harsh words that Rāma’s mother in grief and anger forced the king to hear. He was overcome with sorrow and fell to brooding. And as he brooded there suddenly flashed upon his mind an evil deed he had once done, unintentionally, long ago, when he was shooting arrows by the sound of the target alone. This grief and his grief for Rāma were driving him out of his mind. The mighty lord of the earth, consumed now by a double grief, said to Kausalyā: “I beg your forgiveness, Kausalyā! Here, I cup my hands in supplication. Always, even to strangers, you have been kindly and never cruel. And as you know, my lady, a woman who has regard for righteousness should hold her husband, whether he is virtuous or not, to be a deity incarnate. You have always kept to the ways of righteousness; you can tell good people from bad. Sorrowful though you are, you ought not to speak so unkindly to one more sorrowful still.”

[7–10] As Kausalyā listened to the pitiful words the king uttered in his desolation, tears began to fall from her eyes like fresh rainwater down a runnel. And as she cried she cupped her hands like a lotus and raised them to her head before the king. Confused and alarmed, she spoke, the syllables racing one after the other: “Forgive me, I bow my head, I fall before you to the ground and beg you. It hurts me so that you should beg me, my lord, and you ought not to hurt me. She is counted no real wife in this world or

the next, my mighty lord, whose wise husband, deserving of her praise, must beg her forgiveness.

[11–17] “I do know what is right, my righteous husband, I know you speak the truth. What I said was something uttered in the anguish of grief for my son. Grief destroys restraint, grief destroys all one has learned, grief destroys everything. No enemy is the equal of grief. An unexpected blow from an enemy’s hand might be withstood, but to withstand unexpected grief, however slight, is all but impossible. Only five nights all told have now passed with Rāma living in the forest; but this grief that robs me of every delight makes it seem like five years. As I brood about him the grief grows here, in my heart, just as the waters of the ocean grow great with rivers ever rushing in.” Such were Kausalyā’s heartfelt words, and while she was speaking, the sun’s rays began to fade, and evening came on. And the king, both gladdened by what Queen Kausalyā said and overburdened with grief, yielded to sleep.

Sarga 57

[1–5] A short time later, his heart crushed by grief, King Daśaratha awoke and began to brood once more. Heartache over the exile of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa once more swept over him, the equal of Vāsava, as the eclipse demon’s darkness sweeps over the sun. It was at midnight, on that sixth night since Rāma’s banishment to the forest, when King Daśaratha fully remembered the evil deed he had once done. He then addressed Kausalyā, who lay there anguished with grief for her son: “Whatever a person does, be it good or evil, my dear and precious wife, he receives in like measure, the direct result of the deeds he has done himself. One deserves to be called a fool who sets about a deed without understanding the gravity of its consequences, what he stands to gain or lose.

[6–10] “A person who cuts down a mango grove and instead waters *palāśa* trees—made greedy for their fruit by the sight of their flowers—would be sorry when that fruit appears. I cut down a mango grove and watered *palāśa* trees instead. When the fruit appeared, I had to give up Rāma, and now, too late, I see my folly and I grieve. When I was a young prince, Kausalyā, I earned a reputation as a bowman. It was said, ‘The prince can shoot by the sound of the target alone.’ But I did an evil deed, my lady, and it has now come home to me, this sorrow that I have brought

upon myself. But just as a child might eat something poisonous out of ignorance, so I too was unaware of the consequences my shooting by sound would bear. We were not yet married, my lady, and I was still prince regent. The rains had come, the season that quickens lust and desire.

[11–16] "After having drawn up the moisture of the earth and scorched the world with its rays, the sun had entered the dreadful southern region the dead inhabit. All at once the heat vanished, dark rain clouds appeared, and all creatures began to rejoice—frogs, *sārañga* birds, and peacocks. Engulfed by the rain that had fallen and continued to fall incessantly, the mountain with its *sārañgas* looked like one vast body of water. At this most pleasant of seasons, I decided to get some practice, and, with bow and arrows and chariot, I set out along the Sarayū River. I was an intemperate youth, eager to kill a buffalo at the waterhole in the nighttime, an elephant coming down to the river, or some other wild animal. Suddenly, in the darkness, I heard a noise, beyond the range of vision, of a pitcher being filled in the water, but just like the sound an elephant makes.

[17–21] "I drew out a shaft that glared like a poisonous snake. I shot that keen-edged arrow, and it darted like a poisonous snake. And there, just as day was breaking, a human voice, that of a forest dweller, rang out clearly, crying, 'Ah! Ah!' It was the voice of a young man as he fell into the water, calling out: 'Why would someone shoot a weapon at a person like me, an ascetic? I came to the deserted river at night only to fetch water. Who has struck me with an arrow? What have I done to anyone? I am a seer who has renounced violence, who lives in the wilderness on things of the wild. Why should someone take up a weapon to kill a person like me? The one burden I carry is my matted hair, my garments are nothing but barkcloth and hides. What could anyone gain by killing me? What wrong could I have done him?

[22–26] " 'No, he could have had nothing to gain for what he did. Pure malice must have prompted it. No one shall ever think well of him just as in the case of one who violates his *guru*'s bed. But it is not for the loss of my own life that I am grieving so. It is for two others I grieve when I am slain, my mother and father. For they are an aged couple and have long been dependent on me. When I am dead, dissolved into the five elements, what sort of life are they to lead? My aged mother and father and I all slain by a single arrow! Who can have been so reckless, so malicious as to strike us

down all at once?' When I heard that piteous voice, I who had always striven to do right, shuddered, and the bow and arrow slipped from my hands to the ground.

[27–31] "Desolate to my innermost being, in the depths of misery, I went to the place and saw on the bank of the Sarayū an ascetic struck down by my arrow. He fixed me with his eyes—I was beside myself with terror—and he spoke these harrowing words as though ready to burn me up with his ascetic power: 'What harm have I, living here in the forest, ever done to you, your majesty, that you should attack me when all I wanted was to fetch some water for my elders? The very same arrow that has pierced me to the quick has also struck down two aged blind people, my mother and my father. Both of them are blind and frail; they are thirsty and waiting for me. And now they will have to endure their parching thirst, as long as they can, on the strength of hope alone.

[32–35] " 'I now see that there is no reward for austerity or learning, since my father does not know that I lie fallen upon the ground. And even if he knew, what could he do? He is helpless and unable even to move about, as helpless as one tree to save another that is being felled. So you yourself, Rāghava, must go at once to my father and tell him, lest in his wrath he consume you as a raging fire consumes a forest. There is the footpath, your majesty, leading to my father's ashram. Go and beg his forgiveness, lest he curse you in his rage.

[36–39] " 'Please draw out the arrow from me, your majesty, the keen-edged shaft is tearing me apart at the quick, as a rushing water current tears a soft riverbank apart. I am not a twice-born brahman, your majesty; you may set your mind at ease. For I was born of a *vaiśya* father and a *śūdra* mother, lord of the land.' So, pierced to the quick by my arrow, he spoke in his agony; and, as he lay doubled over, I drew out the shaft. I stared at him lying there by the Sarayū, his body drenched in water, as he lamented in his agony, all the while gasping from his mortal wound; and as I stared, my dear wife, I grew utterly sick at heart."

Sarga 58

[1–4] "It was a great sin I had committed, however unintentionally. I hardly had my wits about me as all alone I put my mind to the question of how might it be righted. At last I took the pot filled with pure water and went

along the path he had told me of, until I reached the ashram. There I saw his parents, a frail, blind old couple with no one to guide them, like a pair of birds whose wings have been clipped. They could not move about and were sitting there listless and helpless, talking about him, their one hope that I had robbed them of.

[5–10] "Hearing the sound of my footsteps, the sage spoke: 'Why did you take so long, my son? Bring the water at once. Your mother here was worried, my child, and all because you were playing in the water. Come into the ashram at once. If perhaps your mother or I have offended you in some way, my son, you should not take it to heart. For you are an ascetic, my child. You are the recourse for us who have no other, the eyes for us whose sight is gone. Our very lives are in your hands. Won't you say something to us?' The longer I looked at the sage, the more frightened I became, and in a choked voice, stammering and slurring the syllables, I spoke to him. With effort I managed to collect my thoughts and recover the power of speech. Then I began to tell him the frightful story of his son's calamity:

[11–17] " 'I am Daśaratha, a kshatriya, not the great one's son. A sorrowful thing, which all good men would condemn, has happened by my own doing. Holy one, I came to the bank of the Sarayū, bow in hand, eager to kill some animal, an elephant perhaps, coming down to a pool. There I heard the sound of a pitcher being filled in the water and, thinking it an elephant, I shot an arrow at it. I went to the riverbank and there I saw an ascetic lying on the ground with an arrow piercing his heart and his life ebbing away. Holy one, I was aiming at a sound, meaning to kill an elephant. I released an iron arrow toward the water, and it struck your son. When the arrow was pulled out, he went to heaven, then and there, grieving for both of you holy ones, lamenting your blindness. It was unintentional, holy one, it was an accident that I struck down your son. Whatever awaits me now, may the sage forgive me!'

[18–23] "The mighty sage gasped when he heard these harrowing words, and broken with grief he spoke to me as I stood before him, his hands cupped in reverence: 'If you had not told me yourself of this impious deed, your majesty, your head would have instantly burst into myriad fragments. If a kshatriya intentionally commits a murder—and the murder of a forest hermit at that—it topples him from his place, be he Indra himself, the

wielder of the *vajra*. But since this act was unintentional, and for that reason alone, you shall live. Were it not so, the entire House of the Rāghavas, not just you, would cease at once to be. Take us, your majesty, to the place,' he said to me. 'We want to see our son now, to have one last sight of him, his body spattered with blood and his hide garments in disarray, lying on the ground unconscious, under the sway of Dharmarāja, god of death.'

[24–30] "So all alone I led the sage and his wife to that place and brought the deeply grieving parents near to where they could touch their son. The wretched couple drew close, they touched their son and collapsed upon his body. And his father cried out: 'My son, don't you love me anymore? At least have regard for your mother then, righteous child. Why don't you embrace me, my son? Speak to me, my tender child. Whom shall I hear late at night—how it used to touch my heart—so sweetly reciting the *śāstras* or other works? And who, after performing the evening *sandhyā* rites, having taken a ritual bath, and having offered oblations to the fire, eater of oblations, will sit down beside me, my son, to allay the grief and fear that anguish me? Who will bring me tubers and fruits and roots and feed me like a welcome guest—me an invalid, without leader or guide? And how, my son, shall I support your poor mother, blind and aged as she is, wretched and yearning for her son?

[31–38] " 'Stay! Don't, oh don't go, my son, to the abode of Yama. You may go tomorrow, with your mother and me to lend you strength. For we too shall soon be going to the house of Yama, bereft of you and left helpless in the forest, wretched and anguished with grief. And then, when I see Vaivasvata, I will make this speech: "May Dharmarāja, god of death, forgive me, but this boy is needed to support his parents." You were free of evil, my son, and were struck down by a man of evil deeds. By the power of this truth may you go straight to the worlds they win who fight under arms. Proceed to the supreme state those heroes reach, my son, who do not turn their backs in battle but die facing the foe. Go, my dear son, to the state attained by Sagara, by Śaibya, Dilīpa, Janamejaya, Nahuṣa, and Dhundhumāra. Go, my dear son, to the state awarded to all holy men for their vedic study and austerities, to one who donates land, who keeps the sacred fires, who is faithful to his one wife; to those who make a gift of a

thousand cows, who support their *gurus*, who lay their bodies down. For no child of this family ever goes to the state of the accursed.'

[39–43] "So he mourned there wretchedly, again and again, and then with his wife he set about making the funeral libation for their child. But just then the sage's son appeared in a heavenly form earned by his own pious deeds, and for one brief moment he addressed these words of solace to his parents: 'I have attained a high station because I took care of you. And both of you shall soon come into my presence.' With this, the sage's disciplined son ascended straightaway to heaven upon a heavenly chariot of wonderful construction. The ascetic and his wife hurriedly made the libation, and as I stood before him, my hands cupped in supplication, the mighty sage said to me:

[44–51] " 'Slay me this very moment, your majesty; death holds no terror for me. For I had but one son and you have taken him from me with your arrow. Since it was unintentionally that you struck down my pure son, I will only lay a curse on you, though it is a grievous and very dreadful one: just as I now sorrow over my son's calamity, so you too, your majesty, shall end your days grieving for a son.' The words of the noble sage have thus come home to me, dear wife, for now I am to lose my life grieving for my son. [pp]If only Rāma could touch me or speak to me now just once. How unlike me it was, my lady, to do what I did to Rāghava. I cannot see you with my eyes, Kausalyā, my mind is failing. Already the messengers of Vaivasvata, the god of death, are here, hastening me on! What greater sorrow than this, that in the final moments of my life I cannot rest my eyes on righteous, truly valorous Rāma. [qq]They are not men, but gods who in the fifteenth year will see Rāma's face again, that lovely face with its flashing earrings.

[52–57] "His eyes are like lotus petals, his brows perfect, his teeth perfect, and his nose lovely. How fortunate will those men be who will see Rāma's face, so like the lord of stars, the moon. How fortunate will be the men who will see my defender's face so like the face of the autumnal moon or a full-blown lotus, and so fragrant. When Rāma has ended his stay in the forest and returns to Ayodhyā, what happiness for those who will see him, like the planet Venus moving forward on its course. The grief arising here in my very soul has left me helpless and insensible. In its wild rush it is sweeping me away, as a raging river sweeps away its bank. Alas! Great-

armed Rāghava, the one relief of my agony!” With this last cry of grief King Daśaratha reached the end of his life. And so it came about, just after midnight, when he had finished his mournful tale, that the lord of men, a man of noble vision, anguished by the exile of his beloved son and afflicted with the most profound sorrow, breathed his last.

Sarga 59

[1–5] Night passed, and in the morning of the following day the panegyrists arrived to attend at the bedchamber of the king. The skillful servants approached as usual, women and eunuchs mostly, people of impeccable conduct. At the proper time and according to custom the bath attendants came, bringing golden pitchers of water scented with yellow sandalwood. And a group of women appeared, young maidens for the most part, bearing auspicious articles, refreshments and accoutrements. The women then assembled who waited in attendance on the bed of the Kosalan lord, and they went to awaken their master.

[6–9] Suddenly they felt apprehensive as to whether the king was indeed alive; a shudder convulsed them and they began to tremble like blades of grass that stand against the current of a stream. Then, as the trembling women looked more closely at the king, their apprehension of evil became a certainty. The lovely women were desolate and sent up a shrill wail, like cow elephants in the wilderness when their bull is driven from his place. At the sound of their crying Kausalyā and Sumitrā awoke at once and came to their senses.

[10–14] Kausalyā and Sumitrā looked at the king and touched him. Then, crying out, “Alas our lord!” they collapsed upon the floor. The daughter of the lord of Kosala lay writhing upon the ground, coated with dust, her brilliance dimmed like that of a star fallen from the sky. A place of panic and bewilderment, with throngs of heartbroken people, tumult and crying everywhere, and kinsmen anguished with grief; all its bliss shattered in an instant, with a desolate and frenzied look—such was the palace of the god of men when he had reached the end of his allotted span. Realizing that the glorious bull among kings had passed away, his wives gathered around him, weeping wildly and piteously in their sorrow and stretching out their arms in helpless lamentation.

Sarga 60

[1–5] Kausalyā gazed at the dead king—he looked like a blazing fire suddenly extinguished, or the ocean emptied of water, or the sun gone dark —and her eyes filled with tears. [rr]Broken now with a double grief, she clasped the head of the king and cried out to Kaikeyī: “You must be satisfied, Kaikeyī, for now you can enjoy the kingship unchallenged. Wasn’t this the one object you had in mind when you forsook the king, you vicious, wicked woman? Rāma has gone away without me, and my husband has gone to heaven. Like someone left behind by a caravan in a trackless waste, I cannot survive. What woman who has lost her husband, her own deity, would want to live—other than Kaikeyī, who has lost the way of righteousness as well?

[6–10] “A greedy person is oblivious to risks; he will eat even unripe fruit. And thus, at the instigation of the hunchback, Kaikeyī has destroyed the House of the Rāghavas. When Janaka learns that the king, acting on an illicit order, has exiled Rāma and his wife, he will suffer just as I do. Lotus-eyed Rāma has gone away as if dead though living! And poor Sītā too, daughter of the king of Videha, she who has never known hardship, will tremble all over at the hardships of the forest. At night Sītā will hear the ghastly cries of birds and beasts and will shrink back into Rāma’s arms in terror. Her father is aged and has but one child. He will brood over Vaidehī. He too will be overpowered by grief and surely lose his life.”

[11–15] As poor Kausalyā lamented in the anguish of sorrow, her maidservants embraced her and led her away. The ministers then took the lord of the world and placed him in a vat of sesame oil, and thereupon they assumed all the royal duties, as they were empowered to do. The counselors, knowing all proper procedures, were reluctant to perform the final rites with no prince at court. And so for the meanwhile they kept watch over the lord of the earth. When the women learned that the advisers had laid the lord of men in the vat of oil, they broke out in lamentation, crying “Alas, he is dead!” Their faces streaming tears, weeping in their burning grief, they raised their arms up piteously and piteously lamented.

[16–19] Like a night without stars, like a woman bereft of her husband, the city of Ayodhyā without its great king was cast into gloom. The people were drenched in tears, the housewives were crying woefully, the public squares and private courtyards were empty, and the brilliance the city once had was gone. As heaven has no light without the sun, bringer of light, as

night has none when the crowds of stars have paled, the city went dark when it lost its great king, and the people, choked with tears, crowded the streets and squares. Men and women had begun to gather in groups, reviling Bharata's mother. They were anguished and could find no comfort in the city, now that the god of men was dead.

Sarga 61

[1–7] Once the night had passed and the sun had risen, the agents of the king, the twice-born brahmans, convened and went to the assembly hall. Mārkaṇḍeya and Maudgalya, Vāmadeva and Kāśyapa, Kātyāyana and Gautama and glorious Jābāli—these twice-born brahmans and the ministers all gave voice to their different opinions. But in the end they turned to Vasiṣṭha himself, the foremost among them, the *purohita* of the king, and said: "The night passed sorrowfully for us; it seemed to last a hundred years, with our king dead of grief for his son. The great king has gone to heaven, Rāma has withdrawn to the wilderness, and glorious Lakṣmaṇa has gone with him. Both Bharata and Śatrughna, slayers of their enemies, are in the land of the Kekayas, in the lovely city of Rājagṛha, the home of Bharata's grandfather. Let some other Ikṣvāku prince be appointed king here and now, lest our kingdom be without a king and thereby meet with destruction.

[8–12] "For in a land without a king, the rumbling, lightning-wreathed clouds do not rain down their heavenly water upon the earth. In a land without a king, handfuls of grain are not sown. In a land without a king, no son submits to his father's will, no wife to her husband's. Where there is no king there can be no wealth; one cannot have a wife where there is no king. And there is yet further peril, for how can there be honesty where there is no king? In a land without a king, patrons take no delight in building assembly halls, lovely gardens, or sanctuaries. In a land without a king, the twice-born men who customarily sacrifice, the self-restrained brahmans rigorous in their vows, institute no sacred rites.

[13–19] "In a land without a king, no festivals or celebrations are held, where actors and dancers come in troupes and which bring a kingdom prosperity. In a land without a king, litigants receive no satisfaction, while storytellers find no favor with audiences by their stories. In a land without a king, lovers and their ladies do not ride out to the countryside on swift

horses. In a land without a king, the rich who live by farming and cattle raising do not sleep securely, with their doors wide open. In a land without a king, merchants traveling long distances with loads of goods for sale do not go their way in safety. In a land without a king, there wander no solitary, disciplined sages, those who lodge where nightfall finds them and contemplate the Self within themselves. In a land without a king, security is not maintained: without a king the army cannot withstand an enemy in battle.

[20–25] “Like rivers without water, like a forest without vegetation, like cows without cowherds is a kingdom without a king. In a land without a king, no one can call anything his own. For men, like fish, incessantly seek to devour one another. Atheists too, who unscrupulously break all bounds, conform to decency only when royal punishment is there to check them. Ah, it would be like darkness, nothing at all remaining clear, were there no king in the world to separate good from evil. And even while our great king was alive, it was your word alone we dared not overstep, just as the ocean does not overstep its shore. Best of the twice-born, consider what awaits us: without a king the kingdom will become a wilderness. Name some other prince of the Ikṣvāku line and consecrate him yourself as our king.”

Sarga 62

[1–5] When he had heard the speech of the brahmans and the hosts of ministers and allies, Vasiṣṭha replied to them: “Bharata is living comfortably with his brother Śatrughna in the city of Rājagṛha, among his uncle’s family. So let swift messengers go at once on speeding horses and bring back the two mighty brothers. Why do we delay?” “Yes, let them go,” they all replied, and when Vasiṣṭha heard their response, he said: “Come, Siddhārtha, Vijaya, Jayanta, Aśoka, Nandana. Listen, I shall tell you all what must be done.

[6–9] “You must take swift horses and proceed swiftly to the city of Rājagṛha. You must keep your grief in check and tell Bharata the following on my authority: ‘The *purohita* asks after your health, as do all the counselors. Please hurry back, for there is urgent business to which you must attend.’ But do not go and tell him of this disaster that has befallen the Rāghavas, do not tell him about Rāma’s exile or the death of the king. Gather silk garments and choice ornaments as gifts for the king and

Bharata, and depart at once." Vasiṣṭha then dismissed the messengers and they hurried off.

[10–15] They crossed the Ganges at Hastinapura after reaching the country of Pañcāla, and then headed west, pressing on through the middle of the Kuru jungle. They swiftly forded the Śaradaṇḍā, a heavenly river running with clear water, the home of birds of every description and thronged with people. There they came upon the venerable and divine *nikūla* tree, known as Satyopayācana, "Granter of Wishes," and, after approaching it reverently, they entered the city of Kuliṅgā. From there they arrived at Abhikāla, passing on from Tejobhibhavana, and, proceeding through the middle of Bāhlīka, they made their way to Mount Sudāman. There the mountain known as Viṣṇu's Footprint came into view, as well as the Vipāśā and Śālmalī Rivers. The road was long and their mounts exhausted, but the messengers pressed on with all haste to Girivraja, best of cities. In order to bring their master the news, to ensure the safety of their master's House and his succession in the dynasty, the messengers wasted no time but hurried on and reached the city late in the night.

Sarga 63

[1–6] Now, the very night during which the messengers entered the city, Bharata had a terrifying dream. The son of the king of kings had this terrible dream just as night was ending, and it sorely troubled him. Observing how troubled he was, his affable companions tried to ease his distress by engaging him in conversation in the assembly hall. [ss]Some made music and sang, while others danced or staged dramatic pieces or told various kinds of jokes. But great Bharata Rāghava took no delight in the conviviality of his affable friends. One close friend questioned Bharata as he sat in the midst of his friends, "Why are you not enjoying yourself, my friend, in the company of your companions?"

[7–12] Bharata then replied to his companion who was speaking in this fashion: "Listen to the reason why this great desolation has come over me. I saw my father in a dream. He was filthy, his hair dishevelled, and he fell from a mountain peak into a foul pool of cowdung. I saw him floating in that pool of dung, drinking sesame oil from his cupped hands, and he seemed to be laughing all the while. Then he was eating rice and oil, his whole body was anointed with oil, and again and again he would plunge

headfirst into the oil. And in the same dream I saw the ocean gone dry and the moon fallen onto the earth. A blazing fire was suddenly extinguished, the earth was split open, and all the trees dried up; the mountains smoked and crumbled.

[13–18] “Then the king lay collapsed on a black iron throne; he was dressed all in black, and there were women mocking him, women part yellow, part black. And that righteous man, wearing red garlands and unguents, was speeding off toward the south on a chariot yoked with donkeys. [tt]Such was the terrifying dream I had last night. Surely I myself, Rāma, the king, or Lakṣmaṇa is going to die. For when in a dream a man sets out in a carriage yoked with donkeys, it is not long before a wreath of smoke appears above his funeral pyre. It is because of this I am so desolate and do not respond to your courtesies. My throat feels as if it were drying up; I can find no peace of mind. I feel a loathing for myself and do not know the reason why. Observing the course of this nightmare, with all those images that never before had entered my mind, and thinking about the king and that unthinkable look he had, I am filled with a great fear, and it will not leave my heart.”

Sarga 64

[1–5] Even as Bharata was relating his dream, the messengers on their weary mounts entered the lovely city of Rājagṛha with its unbreachable moats. They met with the king and the king’s son and were received with honor. Then, clasping the feet of the king, they spoke these words to Bharata: “The *purohita* asks after your health, as do all the counselors. Please hurry back, for there is urgent business to which you must attend. Here is a gift for the king worth two hundred million, great prince, and one for your uncle worth a full hundred million.” Bharata accepted it all and in return honored the messengers with all that they might desire. He then asked, out of deep loyalty to his loved ones:

[6–10] “I trust that my father, King Daśaratha, is well and that Rāma and great Lakṣmaṇa are in good health, as well as noble Kausalyā, wise Rāma’s mother, who is earnest in righteousness, who knows the way of righteousness and ever looks to it? And I trust that my middle mother, Sumitrā, who knows the way of righteousness, the mother of Lakṣmaṇa and mighty Śatrughna, is also in good health? And Kaikeyī too, my ever selfish,

hot-tempered, and irascible mother, who fancies herself so wise, what has she to say to me?” Addressed by great Bharata in this fashion, the messengers most courteously replied, “All those whose welfare you desire, tiger among men, are faring well.”

[11–16] Addressed in this way, Bharata said to the messengers: “I will ask leave of the great king, as you messengers are pressing me to make haste.” After having spoken in this way to the messengers and being pressed by them, Prince Bharata addressed his grandfather: “Your majesty, I must return to my father at the urging of the messengers. But I shall come back again whenever you may wish me to do so.” Being addressed in this fashion by Bharata Rāghava, his grandfather the king kissed him on the forehead and replied to him with these heartfelt words: “Go, my child, I give you leave. Kaikeyī has a worthy son in you, slayer of your enemies. Please give your mother my best wishes, and your father as well. My best wishes also to the *purohita*, my child, and to the other principal twice-born brahmans as well as those two great bowmen, your brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.”

[17–24] The king of Kekaya then honored Bharata with the gift of prize elephants, many-colored blankets, and hides, and gave him riches. Two thousand gold ornaments and sixteen hundred horses were the riches he bestowed in order to honor Kaikeyī’s son. And straightaway Aśvapati lent Bharata his own ministers, estimable men, trustworthy and virtuous, to serve as his travel companions. His uncle gave him riches too: handsome elephants bred on Mount Airāvata and Mount Aindraśira, and swift donkeys that easily took the yoke. He also made him a present of dogs raised in the inner apartments, huge dogs with fangs for weapons and the strength and courage of tigers. Taking leave of his grandfather and his uncle Yudhājit, Bharata boarded his chariot with Śatrughna and set out. And servants yoked the camels, oxen, horses, and donkeys to the circle-wheeled chariots, more than a hundred of them, and followed in Bharata’s train. Thus did great Bharata set out with Śatrughna, under the protection of an army and accompanied by the ministers whom his grandfather trusted like himself. And he left the king’s dwelling untroubled by enemies, as a perfected being might leave the world of Indra.

Sarga 65

[1–5] Heading east, mighty Bharata, the majestic delight of the Ikṣvākus, departed from Rājagṛha and crossed the wide and westward-flowing Śatadrū, a deep river capped with waves. Crossing the river at Eladhāna, he reached Aparaparpaṭa, proceeding on to eastern Śalyakartana after crossing the Śilāvahā. The prince, honest, majestic, and ever true to his word, had the river in view until he passed the high mountains leading to the Caitraratha forest. Crossing the Kuliṅgā, a deep and swift river bounded by hills, he finally rested his army upon reaching the Yamunā. There he rested the weary horses and cooled their limbs. Then, having bathed and drunk, he took a store of water and set out once more.

[6–11] In his handsome chariot the handsome prince passed through the vast, uninhabited wilderness as the wind passes through the sky. Traversing the southern end of Toraṇa, the son of Daśaratha reached Jambūprastha and proceeded to the pleasant village of Varūtha. Having spent the night there in the pleasant forest, he went on, heading eastward to the garden of Ujjihāna, thick with *priyaka* trees. But when he reached those *priyaka* trees, Bharata took leave of the army, and, harnessing swift horses, he sped onward. He spent the night at Sarvatīrtha, and, after crossing the Uttānakā and several other rivers on his mountain-bred horses, he arrived at Hastipṛṣṭhaka, where he forded the Kuṭikā. At Lauhitya the tiger among men crossed the Kapīvatī River, at Ekasāla the Sthāṇumatī, and the Gomatī at Vinata.

[12–21] At Kaliṅganagara, Bharata reached a forest of *sāla* trees and drove on swiftly though his mounts were near exhaustion. He passed straight through the forest at night and at sunrise spied Ayodhyā, the city King Manu built. The tiger among men had spent seven nights on the road, and at last he saw before him the city of Ayodhyā. From within the chariot he addressed his charioteer: “There is Ayodhyā in the distance, that glorious white-clay city with its blessed gardens, throngs of virtuous sacrificers, brahmans who are masters of the *vedas*, and prosperous subjects, all under the protection of the best of royal seers—but how unhappy it looks to me, charioteer. In the past, one used to hear a loud, tumultuous sound in Ayodhyā of men and women all about, but I do not hear it now. At other times, all the gardens revealed men leaving off the sports they had played since dusk and hurrying home. But now, abandoned by the lovers, the gardens seem to be weeping. It looks to me as if the town has become a wilderness, charioteer. Prominent men are no longer to be seen, as in the

past, going in and out on carriages, elephants, and horses. And I see various portents, ominous ones, evil and appalling, and my heart sinks at the sight."

[22–28] He entered by the Gate of Victory, his horses exhausted. The gatekeepers rose and with cries of "Victory to the king!" accompanied him in. In bewilderment Rāghava returned the gatekeepers' greeting, and then addressed Aśvapati's weary charioteer: "We have heard how people looked in times past when they lost their king—and I see those looks here, charioteer, I see them all. The people I see in the town, men and women both, are unkempt, their eyes are filled with tears, and they have a desolate look, haggard, forlorn, and pensive." Speaking in this vein to the charioteer, Bharata proceeded to the palace, heartsick at the ominous sights in Ayodhyā. And as he gazed upon the city that once looked like Indra's city—at the empty crossroads, streets, and houses, at the bars on the door-leaves red with dust—he was filled to overflowing with sorrow. He saw so many unsettling things, things he had never before met with in the city, that great Bharata hung his head, sick at heart and joyless, as he made his way into his father's residence.

Sarga 66

[1–6] Not seeing his father there in his usual place, Bharata went to see his mother in hers. When Kaikeyī saw that her long-absent son had arrived, she sprang up in delight, leaving her golden seat. As soon as righteous Bharata entered his house, he noticed that the royal splendor was absent, and so he clasped his mother's lovely feet. She drew glorious Bharata to her breast, embraced him and kissed him on the forehead, and then she began to question him: "How many days is it now since you left your grandfather's residence? You must have flown along in your chariot. Are you not weary from the journey? Is your grandfather well, and your uncle Yudhājit? Did you enjoy your visit, my son? You must tell me everything."

[7–13] Questioned fondly in this fashion by Kaikeyī, lotus-eyed Bharata, the delight of the king, told his mother everything: "Last night was the seventh since I left Grandfather's residence. Mother's father is well, and so is my uncle Yudhājit. The king, the slayer of enemies, gave me riches and precious objects, but they were an encumbrance, and so I left them on the road and came on ahead. The messengers who carried the order of the king urged me to make haste. Now I have something to ask my mother, and she

must please answer. This comfortable gold-worked couch of yours is empty. And the people of Ikṣvāku seem to me to have lost all delight. The king is usually here in Mother's chamber. I have not yet seen him and so came here in hopes that I would. I should like to clasp my father's feet. Please, Mother, answer me as I am asking you. Could he perhaps be in the chamber of my eldest mother, Kausalyā?"

[14–19] Infatuated by her lust for kingship, Kaikeyī replied to him—an artful mother to an artless son—announcing the grievous event as if it were good news: "Your father has followed the course all living creatures must follow." When he heard these words, Bharata, an honest son of a righteous family, fell suddenly to the ground, shattered by the violence of his grief for his father. Enveloped in grief, sorrowing over the death of his father, mighty Bharata lamented, his mind reeling in confusion. And he said: "This couch of Father's used to look so lovely to me. It does not look that way today, with the wise man gone from it." Seeing her godlike son fallen on the ground, anguished and grief-stricken, Kaikeyī tried to help him up and spoke these words: "Come now, get up. Why are you lying there? Men like you—good men esteemed in the assembly—do not grieve, glorious prince."

[20–25] But he continued to weep for a long time and to roll about on the ground. Then, shrouded in his many sorrows, he said to his mother: "I had imagined the king was going to consecrate Rāma or perform a sacrifice, and so I made the journey in delight. How differently it has all turned out! My very mind is torn apart, that I shall never again see my father, who always strove so earnestly for my happiness and welfare. Oh mother, of what illness did the king pass away before I could return? How fortunate are Rāma and all the others who were present to perform the last rites for Father. But surely the great and illustrious king does not yet know I have come. Otherwise my dear brother would hurry here and bend down to kiss me on the forehead. Where is that hand so pleasant to the touch, the hand of my tireless dear brother, with which he would always brush away the dust from me?

[26–31] "Have my arrival announced to him at once, to tireless Rāma. That wise man is now father, brother, and every kinsman to me, and I am his servant. For in the eyes of a noble man who knows the way of righteousness one's eldest brother is as one's father. His are the feet I would clasp, for he is my only refuge now. But my lady, what did the truthful king,

my father, say? I just want to hear what last message he might have had for me.” Questioned in this way, Kaikeyī replied straightforwardly: “The great king, the foremost of those who live in this world, went to the next world lamenting, ‘Rāma!’ and ‘Alas, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa!’ And when at last the law of time caught your father up, the way snares catch a great elephant, the last words he uttered were these: ‘Fortunate the men who will see Rāma when he comes back with Sītā, and see great-armed Lakṣmaṇa when he comes home.’ ”

[32–35] When he heard this, Bharata became still more distraught, for he anticipated yet another calamity. With an expression of deep distress he questioned his mother further, asking, “But where can the righteous prince have gone, the delight of Kausalyā, with our brother Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā?” Questioned thus, his mother again answered straightforwardly. She promptly began to relate the grievous event, thinking it would be received as good news: “My son, the prince went off in barkcloth garments to the great Daṇḍaka forest, with Vaidehī and Lakṣmaṇa following after him.”

[36–38] Bharata was alarmed when he heard this, for doubts had been raised about his brother’s conduct. Concerned for the greatness of his dynasty, he began questioning her further: “I trust that Rāma did not seize the wealth of a brahman, or did not harm some innocent man, whether rich or poor? And I trust that the prince did not covet another man’s wife. Then why was he exiled to the Daṇḍaka forest like one who has slain an unborn child?”

[39–45] His capricious mother then began to tell exactly what she had done, with the same feminine disposition that had made her do it: “No, Rāma did not seize the wealth of any brahman. He harmed no innocent man, rich or poor, and Rāma would never so much as cast his eyes upon the wife of another man. It was I, my son. As soon as I learned of Rāma’s consecration, I demanded that your father award you the kingship and exile Rāma. Your father followed the proper course of action and did exactly that, and so Rāma and Saumitri were sent away with Sītā. Once his beloved son was gone from his sight, the glorious protector of the earth was crushed with such grief for his son that he died. So now you must assume the kingship, as you know to be right. It was on your behalf I did all this, in such a way. Therefore, my son, in concert with the principal twice-born brahmans—those who know the ritual precepts, under the lead of Vasiṣṭha

—you must at once perform according to precept the last rites for the courageous king, and then have yourself consecrated to power over the wide earth."

Sarga 67

[1–5] When Bharata learned that his father had passed away and his two brothers were in exile, he was consumed with sorrow and spoke these words: "What possible use have I for the kingship, stricken as I am and grieving, bereft of both my father and the brother who is like a father to me? You have heaped sorrow upon my sorrow, rubbed salt into a wound, by killing the king and turning Rāma into an ascetic. Like the dark night of doom have you come to annihilate this House. My father had no idea he was holding a firebrand in his embrace. It will be a miracle if Kausalyā and Sumitrā survive this torture of grief for their sons—and all because of you, my very own mother!

[6–10] "My brother is righteous and knows the proper way to behave toward his elders, and surely his behavior toward you was perfect, just as it was toward his own mother. My eldest mother, Kausalyā, farsighted though she is, treated you like a sister in her adherence to the way of righteousness. And you have sent her accomplished son away in barkcloth garments, to a life in the forest! Can you feel no grief, evil woman? He is an accomplished and glorious hero who never contemplated evil. What possible purpose could you have had in sight to banish him in barkcloth garments? Was it all for the sake of kingship that you brought about this great misfortune? In your greed, I suppose, you never understood how I felt toward Rāma.

[11–15] "With those tigers among men, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, gone from my sight, by virtue of what power would I be able to protect the kingdom? Even the great, mighty, and righteous king himself would constantly retreat behind his mighty son, like Mount Meru behind its forest. What strength have I to bear such a burden? I am like a mere calf before a load only a great ox could draw. Even were I to acquire the power through stratagems or force of intellect, I would never grant you your wish—not you, a woman so greedy on behalf of her son. I will bring my brother back from the forest, the beloved of his people." So great Bharata spoke—and how hard his words struck, the very opposite of what she had hoped—and he roared out once more in the anguish of his grief, like a lion inside a mountain cave.

Sarga 68

[1–5] Having reviled his mother in this way, Bharata, in the grip of a wild rage addressed her once more: "It is you who should be expelled from the kingdom, Kaikeyī, you vicious, wicked woman! [uu]And you should be abandoned in accordance with all that is right. May you weep your eyes out without me. What possible wrong could the king or perfectly righteous Rāma have done you, that because of you they should now have found death and banishment, respectively? You are guilty of murdering the unborn by your destruction of this House. May you go to hell, Kaikeyī, and never come to share the afterworld of your husband. That you could be capable of such evil and so horrible a deed—renouncing the beloved of all the world—makes me fearful on my own account as well.

[6–10] "Because of you, my father is gone and Rāma withdrawn to the wilderness, and you have brought infamy upon me in the eyes of every living soul. O enemy of mine in a mother's guise, malicious woman lusting for kingship! Never speak to me again, you depraved murderess of your husband! Kausalyā and Sumitrā and the rest of my mothers are afflicted by great sorrow, and it is all your fault, you defiler of our House! You are no true daughter of Aśvapati, a wise and righteous king, but rather a *rākṣasa* woman born to lay your father's House in ruins. Because of you, righteous Rāma, constant in his devotion to truth, has been driven out to the forest, while Father has gone to heaven in his grief.

[11–14] "This evil for which you have striven falls upon my head; for I am left without my father and abandoned by my brothers, to become an object of hatred to all the world. You have parted Kausalyā from her son, a woman who has never departed from righteousness. What afterworld can you attain now, you evil-scheming creature? You can only go to hell. Are you not aware, cruel woman, that Rāma—a man of restraint, the refuge of his kinsmen, the eldest son and his father's one equal—arose from Kausalyā's very self? Limb from mother's limb is a son born, and from her heart. That is why she loves him above all, because he is her very dearest, and not a mere kinsman.

[15–19] "Once upon a time, so the story goes, righteous Surabhi, the cow held in high esteem by the gods, caught sight of two of her sons. They were ploughing the broad earth, in a state of stupor. Seeing her sons lying on the ground at midday, exhausted, she wept in grief for them, and her

eyes were flooded with tears. Clear and fragrant her teardrops fell, and they touched a limb of the great king of the gods, Indra, as he was passing below her. Indra, wielder of the *vajra*, saw how the illustrious cow was consumed with grief, and the king of the gods was disquieted. He cupped his hands in reverence and addressed her: ‘No great danger threatens us from any quarter, does it? What is the cause of your grief? Tell me, all-beneficent cow.’

[20–24] “Addressed in this way by the wise king of the gods, Surabhi composed herself and eloquently replied: ‘Perish the thought! No, nothing threatens you from any quarter, overlord of the immortal gods. I am grieving only for two of my sons, who languish in their sorry plight. I see how haggard and desolate these two bullocks are, how the rays of the sun are burning them, and how the ploughman beats them, overlord of the gods. They were born of my body, and for me to see them so sorrowful and oppressed by burdens is agony. For there is nothing so dear as a son.’ The wish-granting cow had thousands of sons, and even so she grieved. How much more so will Kausalyā grieve, who must live without Rāma?

[25–29] “This good woman has but one son, and you have made her childless. For this you shall reap sorrow forever, both in this world and when you die. As for me, there is no question but that I must make full amends to my brother and father, and so restore our glory. I will have Kausalyā’s splendid son brought back and go myself into the forest where sages make their home.” When he had finished speaking in this fashion, he resembled an elephant in the wilderness driven with prods and goads, and he fell upon the ground in a rage, hissing like a snake. His eyes bloodshot, his clothes in disarray, all his jewelry cast aside, the enemy-slaying prince lay fallen on the ground like the flagstaff of Indra, Śacī’s lord, when that god’s festival is over.

Sarga 69

[1–5] As great Bharata was crying out in this way, Kausalyā, recognizing his voice, said to Sumitrā: “Far-sighted Bharata, the son of that cruel woman Kaikeyī, has returned. I want to see him.” Having said this, she set out to where Bharata was, trembling and almost insensible, her face drained of color and her garment filthy. But at that very same time Rāma’s younger brother Bharata was setting out to Kausalyā’s residence, accompanied by

Śatrughna. And, when in their sorrow, Śatrughna and Bharata spied Kausalyā, they embraced her. For tormented by anguish and nearly unconscious, she had collapsed.

[6–11] Then, in deep sorrow, Kausalyā spoke to Bharata: "You lusted for the kingship and here you have it unchallenged—and how quickly Kaikeyī secured it for you by her cruel deed. But what advantage did that cruel and scheming Kaikeyī hope to gain by driving out my son to live in the forest in barkcloth garments? Why doesn't Kaikeyī at once drive me out as well to where my son Rāma, my glorious Hiraṇyanābha, is staying? Then again, I should be happy to set out on my own to where Rāghava is living, with only Sumitrā to attend upon me and the *agnihotra* fire carried before us. But no, truly it is up to you to send me there yourself, to where my son, the tiger among men, is practicing austerities. For this vast kingdom is now yours; she has delivered it to you, with all its abundance of wealth and grain, all its teeming elephants, horses, chariots."

[12–17] As Kausalyā lamented in this way, shrouded in her many sorrows, Bharata cupped his hands in reverence and addressed her: "My lady, why do you reproach me who am guiltless and knew nothing of this. You know how deep and enduring is my love for Rāghava. May a man never come to think in harmony with the *śāstras* if he approves of the departure of my elder brother Rāma, the very best of men, who always keeps his word. May such a one come to serve the most wicked of men, may he pass urine facing the sun and kick a sleeping cow if he approves of my brother's departure. May the unrighteousness attaching to a master who forces an onerous task upon his servant without remuneration attach to him if he approves of my brother's departure. May the sin that beings incur in turning traitor to a king who has protected them like his own children be reckoned to his account if he approves of my brother's departure.

[18–23] "May the unrighteousness attaching to a king who levies a sixth portion in tax without guarding his subjects attach to him if he approves of my brother's departure. May the sin men incur who promise priests their fee at a sacrifice and then cry off be reckoned to his account if he approves of my brother's departure. May he never honor the code of the brave in battle where elephants, horses, and chariots are crowding and weapons flying thick if he approves of my brother's departure. The subtle meaning of the *śāstras*, which the wise impart with so much care, may the evil-hearted man

forever lose if he approves of my brother’s departure. May he eat rice porridge, sesame porridge, and goat’s flesh to no purpose; may he show contempt for his *gurus*, a ruthless man who approves of my brother’s departure. May his children, his wife, and his servants huddle about him at home while he alone eats delicacies if he approves of my brother’s departure.

[24–28] “May he be guilty of the sin charged to one who murders a king, a woman, a child, or an elder, or who abandons his dependents. May the sin charged to one who sleeps through both the morning and evening *sandhyā* rites be reckoned to his account who sanctioned my brother’s going. May he be guilty of the sins of arson, violation of a *guru*’s bed, and treachery to allies. May he never show obedience to the gods, his ancestors, his mother or father, he who sanctioned my brother’s departure. And may he be excluded at once, this very moment, from the deeds practiced by the good, from the praises of the good, from the world of the good, if he approves of my brother’s departure.”

[29–34] In this way, the prince tried to reassure Kausalyā, bereft as she was of her husband and son, and then, in the anguish of his sorrow, he collapsed. Pronouncing severe curses in this fashion, Bharata then lay there insensible and consumed with grief as Kausalyā addressed him: “This sorrow of mine, my son, has grown only greater. That you should pronounce such curses chokes the very breath of life within me. Thank god, my child, that your own thoughts never swerved from righteousness any more than those of Lakṣmaṇa. If what you promise me is true, you shall attain the world of the virtuous.” And as great Bharata lamented in the anguish of his sorrow, his mind was in turmoil from all the confusion and besieged by grief. And as he went on wildly lamenting, he fell in a stupor to the ground. Heaving deep sighs all the while, he passed the night lost in grief.

Sarga 70

[1–5] As Kaikeyī’s son, Bharata, remained consumed with grief, Vasiṣṭha, most eloquent of seers, came and eloquently said to him: “Bless you, glorious prince, enough of this grief. It is time you performed the funerary rites for the lord of men.” Upon hearing Vasiṣṭha’s words, Bharata regained his composure, and, wise in the ways of righteousness, he commenced the

performance of all the funeral rites. The protector of the earth was removed from the oily liquid and laid upon the earth. His face had a yellowish tinge, and he seemed to be asleep. His son then had Daśaratha laid upon a sumptuous bed encrusted with all kinds of gems, and he began to lament over him in deep sorrow, crying:

[6–9] “Why did you take this decision, your majesty, when I was away, before I could return, after sending righteous Rāma into exile with mighty Lakṣmaṇa? Where are you going, great king, leaving your people in sorrow when the lion among men, tireless Rāma, has already left them? Who is there, your majesty, to maintain the security of your city, now that you have gone to heaven, dear Father, and Rāma has withdrawn to the forest? The earth has been widowed, your majesty; bereft of you it is cast into gloom. And the city looks to me like the night without a moon.”

[10–17] And as Bharata lamented in this fashion, sick at heart, the great seer Vasiṣṭha addressed him once again: “The funeral rites must now be performed for the lord of the people. Let it all be done fully, great-armed prince, and without delay.” “So be it,” Bharata replied, heeding Vasiṣṭha’s command, and he urged all the sacrificial priests, the *purohitas*, and preceptors to make haste. The sacred fires of the lord of men had been placed outside the fire-sanctuary, and the sacrificial priests and other sacrificers fetched them in accordance with the ritual precepts. Disconsolate and choked with sobs, his attendants raised the lifeless king onto a litter and bore him out. Ahead of the king went people strewing the way with gold and silver and different kinds of garments. Others brought the resins of sandalwood and aloewood and *sarala*, *padmaka*, and *devadāru* wood and built the pyre. After placing various other fragrant substances on the pyre, the sacrificial priests laid the protector of the earth in its center.

[18–23] The sacrificial priests made offering to the fire and intoned prayers for him, while the chanters of the *Sāmaveda* sang the hymns in accordance with the *śāstras*. In palanquins and carriages, according to their rank, his wives had come out from the city in the company of the elders. And as the flames engulfed the king and as the sacrificial priests walked leftward around him, the grieving women did likewise, with Kausalyā at their head. At that hour could be heard a cry like the cry of *krauñca* hens as the anguished women by the thousands raised a piteous wail. Afterward, amid uncontrolled weeping and constant lamentation, the women went to

the bank of the Sarayū and alighted from their carriages. After making the funeral libation, the king's wives, the counselors, the *purohitas*, and Bharata tearfully reentered the city, where they sat upon the ground to pass the ten-day period of ritual death impurity.

Sarga 71

[1–5] When the ten-day period was over, the prince purified himself, and on the twelfth day he had the memorial *śrāddha* rites performed. To the brahmans he gave precious objects, money, and abundant food—goat's flesh and much white rice—and cows by the hundreds. And the prince bestowed male and female slaves, carriages, and grand houses upon the brahmans as the funerary gifts of the king. On the thirteenth day at the hour of dawn, great-armed Bharata went out to perform the ceremony of purification at the foot of his father's pyre. Overwhelmed by grief, he began to lament. [vv]His throat choked with tears, he cried out in his deep sorrow:

[6–10] "Oh dear Father, my brother Rāghava, to whose care you committed me, is banished to the forest, and you have left me in an utter void! My king, my father, where have you gone? With her son, her sole refuge, banished to the forest, you have left mother Kausalyā without a protector." And when he saw the ash-brown circle where the charred bones lay, the place where his father's body had met extinction, he gave way to despair and cried aloud. He was desolated by the sight of it and fell weeping to the ground, the way Śakra's banner might fall from its halyard while being raised. His ministers all rushed to the aid of the pious prince, just as did the seers when Yayāti fell at his final hour.

[11–15] Seeing Bharata overwhelmed with grief, Śatrughna likewise fell senseless to the ground, fondly remembering the protector of the earth. He was nearly out of his mind, and like a madman he began to lament in his profound sorrow. Recalling with every passing minute another of his father's virtues, he cried: "Churned up in all its fury by Mantharā, agitated by Kaikeyī as its sea monster, and the offer of the boon its overwhelming flood, a sea of grief has swallowed us! Where have you gone, dear Father, leaving Bharata to lament, a boy so delicate and young, whom you always treated so indulgently? Remember how you used to give us all so many delicacies to choose from, so many drinks, garments, and ornaments—who will do that for us now?

[16–20] “If the earth does not dissolve at once, though bereft of you, great and righteous king, it never will, not even at the hour of universal dissolution. With Father gone to heaven and Rāma withdrawn to the wilderness, what strength have I to live? I will enter the blazing fire, eater of oblations. Bereft of my brother and father, I will not enter an empty Ayodhyā that Ikṣvāku once protected. No, I will enter a grove of asceticism.” When they heard the two brothers’ lamentation and reflected on their calamity, the attendants were all afflicted with an anguish even sharper than before. In their despair and exhaustion, both Bharata and Śatrughna lay writhing on the ground like bulls with shattered horns.

[21–25] But their father’s *purohita*, the wise Vasiṣṭha, maintaining his usual composure, helped Bharata to his feet and said to him: “There are three dualities to which every living thing without exception is subject. [ww]They cannot be avoided, and so you must not act in this way.” Meanwhile, Sumantra helped Śatrughna to his feet, consoling him and, knowing the true nature of things, explained how all living things are born and so must die. The two glorious tigers among men then stood, but they both looked like banners of Indra ruined by sun and rain. The sons wiped away the tears from their reddened eyes and mourned in desolation until, at the ministers’ urging, they turned to the remaining rites.

Sarga 72

[1–5] Now, as the grief-stricken Bharata was making the journey back, Lakṣmaṇa’s younger brother Śatrughna addressed him with these words: “Mighty Rāma, the refuge of all creatures in sorrow, and of himself most of all, has been banished to the forest by a woman! And what of the powerful, the mighty Lakṣmaṇa? Why did he not free Rāma, even if it meant imprisoning Father? If he had fully weighed both sides of the issue, he would have imprisoned the king at the very first—a man who was under a woman’s power and bent on an evil course.” Now, as Lakṣmaṇa’s younger brother Śatrughna was speaking in this vein, the hunchback appeared at the front gate, all adorned with jewelry.

[6–10] She was anointed with the essence of sandalwood and dressed in queenly garments, and, with her many-colored belts and sashes, she looked like a female monkey tied up with rope. Catching sight of the hunchback, the cause of all the trouble, a gatekeeper ruthlessly seized her, at the same

time calling to Śatrughna: “Here is the evil, malicious woman! It is her doing that Rāma is in the forest and your father has given up his mortal body. Do with her as you see fit.” When he heard this, the devoted and sorrowing Śatrughna cried out to all the servants of the inner apartments: “This is the woman who has brought such bitter sorrow upon my brothers and my father. Let her now taste the fruit of her malicious deed.”

[11–15] And having said so, he violently seized the hunchback as she stood amidst her female companions, so that the house resounded with her cries. Her companions stared with wild consternation at the raging Śatrughna and then fled in all directions. And they then all took counsel together, crying: “In the course of his mad attack he will annihilate us all. Illustrious Kausalyā is compassionate, generous, and righteous. We must take refuge with her. She will ensure our safety.” His eyes coppery red in his fury, Śatrughna, slayer of his enemies, dragged the howling hunchback across the ground.

[16–19] And as Mantharā was being dragged to and fro, her many-colored pieces of jewelry were shattered in fragments all over the ground. With the jewelry scattered about it the majestic palace seemed to shine all the more, like the sky in autumn. In his rage, the powerful bull among men, still holding her in his powerful grip, cried out harshly, reviling Kaikeyī. Śatrughna’s bitter and sorrowful words plunged Kaikeyī even deeper into sorrow, and, terrified by his threats, she sought refuge with her son.

[20–25] Bharata glanced at her and called out to the raging Śatrughna: “If any creature is not to be slain it is a woman. Forbear! I would kill this woman myself, this evil, wicked Kaikeyī, were it not that righteous Rāma would condemn me as a matricide. If righteous Rāghava were to learn that even this hunchback were slain, he would surely never speak to you or me again.” Upon hearing Bharata’s words, Lakṣmaṇa’s younger brother Śatrughna checked his fury and released Mantharā. Panting and anguished with sorrow, Mantharā fell at Kaikeyī’s feet, lamenting wretchedly. Bharata’s mother looked at the hunchback and began gently to soothe her as she lay anguished and stunned from Śatrughna’s abuse, staring like a trapped *krauñca* hen.

Sarga 73

[1–5] At dawn on the fourteenth day the deputies of the king convened and addressed Bharata: “Daśaratha, our most revered *guru*, has gone to heaven, having first banished Rāma, his eldest son, and mighty Lakṣmaṇa. O glorious prince, you must become our king this very day. Our kingdom is without a leader, and only by mere chance has it not yet come to grief. Your people and the guildsmen await you, Prince Rāghava, with all the materials for the consecration in hand. You must assume the kingship, Bharata, the great office of your fathers and forefathers. Have yourself consecrated, bull among men, and protect us.”

[6–13] The devoted Bharata then reverently circled all the articles for the consecration and made this reply to all the people: “It has always been the custom of our House that the kingship passes to the eldest son. You men are aware of this and ought not to ask such a thing of me. Rāma, our elder brother, shall be the lord of the earth. As for me, I will live in the wilderness for the nine years and five. Let a great army be marshaled, complete with all four divisions; for I myself will bring my eldest brother, Rāma, back from the forest. And all the consecration materials standing ready here I will carry in the vanguard as I go to the forest on Rāma’s behalf. Then and there I will consecrate Rāma, tiger among men, and bring him back in the vanguard, like a sacred fire from the sacrificial ground. I will never grant this woman her wish, she who but faintly resembles a mother. I shall live in the trackless forest, and Rāma shall be king. Let a road be made by artisans, let the rough sections be leveled out, let guards accompany them, and men to scout out the trackless regions on the way.”

[14–17] When the prince had ended this speech on behalf of Rāma, all the people answered him with an earnest prayer for majesty, crying out, “May Śrī of the Lotus ever attend upon you for what you have said here, you who wish to bestow the earth upon the eldest prince.” When the nobles heard the unsurpassed speech the prince had uttered for all to hear, tears of joy for him welled up in their eyes and ran down their cheeks. The ministers and members of the council had listened joyfully to his words. Their grief allayed, they said to him, “On your orders, best of men, the devoted people and companies of artisans shall be given instructions concerning the road.”

Sarga 74

[1–5] Then surveyors and men trained in measurement, powerful excavators who were zealous in their work; engineers, laborers, craftsmen, and men skilled in machinery; carpenters, road-levelers, woodcutters, well-drillers, pavers, cane-weavers, and capable guides all set out from the city. Proceeding joyfully to the appointed region, that vast flood of people resembled the great rushing tide of the sea under a full moon. The skilled road builders took their places each in his own contingent, and, with all their different kinds of tools, they set out in advance.

[6–10] Through vines, creepers and shrubs, through stumps and boulders and all kinds of trees, the workers cut and built a road. In treeless areas some of them transplanted trees, while elsewhere some set to work chopping with axes, mattocks, and scythes. Other, stronger men, cleared the strong-rooted stalks of *vīraṇa* grass and the more impenetrable areas. Still others took dirt and with it filled dry wells and gaping holes, while some leveled out the tracts of land on every side. Men then bridged the areas that needed bridging, pounded those that needed pounding, and drained those in need of draining.

[11–15] In a short time they enlarged the volume and shape of many streams so that they looked like so many oceans, and they built various kinds of reservoirs embellished with benches. The road for the army was paved and whitewashed, lined with blossoming trees, resounding with the calls of flocks of wild birds; it was adorned with banners, sprinkled with sandalwood water, ornamented with all sorts of flowers, and it shone with the brilliance of the Milky Way. Now, certain sites in the loveliest tracts where fruit grew rich and sweet were selected as rest areas for the great Bharata. The superintendents, diligently following the orders they had received, gave orders to beautify these places with special ornamental work until they looked like perfect ornaments.

[16–21] Under auspicious constellations and at auspicious hours the experts laid the foundations for great Bharata's rest areas. [xx]The workers spread heaps of sand around the sites, built moats to encircle them, erected poles and crossbeams and bars. The sites were adorned with lovely lanes and garlanded with banners. Well-constructed thoroughfares ran through them all. And with their lofty, spire-topped mansions that seemed to wander lost in the sky, they resembled the city of Indra itself. Where the royal road met the Jāhnavī—with its groves of different trees, its cool, clear water and

shoals of large fish—it sparkled like the clear vault of heaven at night when the moon and crowds of stars embellish it. It was a lovely road every step of the way, built by master artisans.

Sarga 75

[1–6] As bright-faced dawn was breaking, bards and genealogists, masters of all the fine points of speech, came to sing the praises of Bharata and wish him good fortune. Beaten with golden drumsticks, the drum of the nightwatch resounded, while conches by the hundreds and high- and low-pitched instruments were sounded. The loud sound of musical instruments seemed to fill the heavens, though it only brought more lacerating grief to the grief-stricken Bharata. On awakening, he put a halt to the clamor, exclaiming, “I am not the king!” Then, turning to Śatrughna, he said: “See, Śatrughna, what a great wrong these people are doing because of Kaikeyī. And King Daśaratha is gone, leaving me all these troubles. This royal majesty, founded on righteousness, belonged to him, the great and righteous king. And now it is adrift like a ship on the water without a helmsman.”

[7–11] Seeing Bharata wildly lamenting, the women all broke out in piteous, shrill weeping. He was still lost in lamentation as glorious Vasiṣṭha, the authority in all matters of kingship, made his way to the assembly hall of the lord of the Ikṣvākus. It was a lovely hall fashioned of gold and richly studded with jewels and gems, and it resembled the gods’ assembly hall, Sudharmā, as the righteous family priest entered with his attendants. The master of all the *vedas* sat down upon a golden bench covered with a costly spread and gave his instructions to the heralds: “Go at once and diligently fetch the brahmans, kshatriyas, soldiers, ministers, and commanders of the troops. There is urgent business to which we must attend.”

[12–14] Soon there arose a tumultuous din as the people began arriving on chariots, horses, and elephants. And as Bharata approached, the subjects called out their greetings to him just as they used to greet Daśaratha, the way the immortal gods greet Indra of the hundred sacrifices. The hall was like a pool filled with gems and shells and pebbles, its waters still despite the teeming fish and serpents. And the son of Daśaratha lent it such beauty as it had in the past, when Daśaratha himself was there.

Sarga 76

[1–7] [yy]Crowded with hosts of nobles all favorably inclined toward Bharata, the assembly hall appeared to the wise Vasiṣṭha like the night of the full moon. As the nobles took their seats in proper order, the hall looked like a full-moon evening when the clouds have vanished. Observing that all the king's subjects were represented in full, the *purohita*, knowing the ways of righteousness, commenced this gentle address to Bharata: "My son, King Daśaratha went to heaven in the performance of righteousness, after making over to you this prosperous land abounding in wealth and grain. Rāma likewise held fast to truth, mindful of the righteous ways that virtuous men follow. He could no more cast aside his father's command than can the rising hare-marked moon its light. Your father and brother have bestowed on you unchallenged kingship. You must take possession of it and gladden the ministers. You must have yourself consecrated at once. Let the sovereigns of the north and west and south, and the westernmost ones who live by the sea, deliver up vast riches to you."

[8–10] Hearing these words, Bharata was overwhelmed with grief. Knowing what was right and anxious to abide by it, he turned his thoughts to Rāma. With words choked with tears and in a voice like the call of the *kalahaṃsa*, the young prince began to lament and to rebuke the *purohita* in the midst of the assembly, saying: "The kingship belongs to that wise prince who has practiced chastity, perfected his knowledge, and always striven for righteousness. How could a person like me dare seize it from him?

[11–15] "How could a son born of Daśaratha usurp the kingship? The kingship, and I myself, belong to Rāma. Please see to it that your advice is in keeping with righteousness. Righteous Kākutstha, the eldest son and the best, the equal of Dilīpa and Nahuṣa, must obtain the kingship just as Daśaratha did. The other course is an evil one, followed only by ignoble men, and does not lead to heaven. Were I to take it I should become a disgrace to the House of the Ikṣvākus in the eyes of all the world. I do not condone the evil deed my mother has done. Though I am here and he in the trackless forest, I cup my hands in reverence and bow to him. I will go after Rāma—he is my king, the foremost of all who go on two feet. Rāghava deserves not only this, but kingship over all three worlds!"

[16–20] When they heard these righteous words, the men of the assembly, whose thoughts were ever with Rāma, all shed tears of joy. Continuing, Bharata said: "If I cannot bring my noble brother back from the

forest, then in that very forest will I stay, just like my noble brother Lakṣmaṇa. I will use every means in my power to compel him to return to the presence of you just, virtuous, and honorable noblemen." With this, righteous Bharata, who so cherished his brother, turned to the skillful counselor Sumantra standing by his side and said: "Make haste and go, Sumantra! On my authority muster the army at once and give the command for the expedition."

[21–25] Addressed in this fashion by great Bharata, Sumantra went off in delight and gave all the orders as he had been directed and had hoped to do. The subjects and the marshals of the army were delighted to receive the command for an expedition to bring Rāghava back. The soldiers' wives too, when they learned of the expedition, were all delighted, and in each and every house they pressed their husbands to hurry. The marshals rallied the entire army, the soldiers, the horses, the fast oxcarts, and the chariots swift as thought. Bharata saw that the army was ready as he stood in the midst of his *gurus*. Turning to Sumantra, who was at his side, he said, "Hurry and bring my chariot."

[26–30] Sumantra received Bharata's command in great delight and came forth with a chariot harnessed with splendid horses. Bharata Rāghava was a courageous prince who held fast to truth and strove to act truthfully. His glorious *guru* was away in the great wilderness, and he was ready to go and beg his forgiveness. The words he spoke were fitting when he said: "Make haste, Sumantra, and go to the leaders of the army to have the troops marshaled. Rāma is in the forest, and I mean to beg his forgiveness and bring him back for the welfare of the world." Thus duly commanded by Bharata, the son of charioteers, his every wish fulfilled, gave instructions to all the leading subjects, to the heads of the army, and to all their many loved ones. And then the men of every household, the kshatriyas, *vaiśyas*, *śūdras*, and brahmans too, made haste and harnessed their camel-carts, their elephants, donkeys, and purebred horses.

Sarga 77

[1–5] Then Bharata, having arisen at an early hour, boarded his excellent chariot and set forth swiftly, eager to see Rāma. Before him went all the counselors and *purohitas* in horse-drawn chariots that resembled the chariot of the sun. Nine thousand elephants marshaled according to custom

followed Bharata, the delight of the House of the Ikṣvākus, as he progressed. And sixty thousand chariots and archers with every sort of weapon followed the glorious Prince Bharata as he progressed as well. One hundred thousand horses, each with a rider, followed the glorious Prince Bharata Rāghava as he progressed.

[6–10] Kaikeyī, Sumitrā, and illustrious Kausalyā traveled in a resplendent carriage, delighted to be bringing Rāma back. Throngs of nobles went along in hopes of seeing Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. With delight in their hearts, they held animated conversation about him, saying: "When will we see Rāma, dark as a storm cloud, great-armed, unshakable in valor and firm of vows, the one who allays the grief of the world? For the mere sight of Rāghava will dispel our grief, as the rising sun, bringer of day, dispels the darkness of all the world." The men of the city carried on such heartfelt conversation as this and embraced one another as they made their way along.

[11–18] Every estimable subject, the merchants and all the others, set off in delight to find Rāma. Jewelers and master potters, weavers and weapon-smiths, workers in peacock feathers, sawyers, bauble-makers, gem-cutters, workers in ivory, plasterers, perfumers, renowned goldsmiths, blanket-cleaners, bath attendants, valets, physicians, incense merchants and vintners, washermen and tailors, the headmen of villages and hamlets, actors with their women, and fishermen—all were making the journey. And thousands of brahmans all together, masters of the *vedas* esteemed for their conduct, followed Bharata in their oxcarts as he went. [zz]Everyone was handsomely attired in clean clothing and anointed with pure coppery unguents, and on a great array of vehicles they slowly followed Bharata. Delighted and cheerful, the attendant army followed Kaikeyī's son, Bharata, and soon it came to a halt.

[19–23] Observing the army stop, and spying the Ganges with its auspicious waters, Bharata addressed all his advisers with these well-spoken words: "Have my army pitch camp anywhere it chooses. Straightaway tomorrow, when we are rested, we shall cross the great river. Meanwhile, as for myself, I wish to go down to the river and offer water to the departed king as part of his funerary rites." And as he spoke in this fashion, the ministers all together replied with a word of assent. Then they ordered each group to pitch camp separately and wherever they pleased.

When the army, magnificent with its equipment all arrayed, was encamped along the great river Ganges, Bharata took up his dwelling and began to ponder how to bring great Rāma back.

Sarga 78

[1–5] Now, when the king of the Niṣādas, saw the many-bannered army encamped along the river Ganges, he hastened to speak to his kinsmen, saying: "A great army has appeared here, as vast as the sea. I cannot imagine what its purpose might be, however much thought I give it. There is a huge battle standard upon a chariot, marked with a *kovidāra* tree. Has someone come to take us fisherfolk captive, or to kill us? Or is it perhaps that Bharata, Kaikeyī's son, is marching out to slay Rāma Dāśarathi, whom his father has exiled from the kingdom? Rāma Dāśarathi is both my master and my friend. We must champion his cause. Arm yourselves and take up positions here on the bank of the Ganges.

[6–10] "All the fishermen are to take up positions along the river Ganges. Guard the river with your troops, provisioning yourselves with meat, roots, and fruits." And he exhorted them further: "Let the younger fishermen arm themselves and take up their positions, a hundred each on five hundred boats. [aaa]But should it turn out that Bharata is favorable toward Rāma, this army of his may safely cross the Ganges today." When he had spoken in this fashion, Guha, overlord of the Niṣādas, took gifts and fish, meat, and honey-wine, and went forth to meet Bharata. Seeing him approach, the valorous charioteer's son Sumantra, who knew proper deference, deferentially informed Bharata with the following words:

[11–15] "Here is the chief surrounded by a thousand of his kinsmen. He is an old friend of your brother's and knows the Daṇḍaka forest well. Therefore you should permit Guha, the overlord of the Niṣādas, to see you, Kākutstha. For he will undoubtedly know where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are." When Bharata had heard Sumantra's fitting words, he replied, "Have Guha come to see me at once." Guha was delighted to receive permission, and surrounded by his kinsmen, he humbly approached Bharata and said: "This region is your pleasure garden. You caught us here quite unawares, but we all bid you a welcome stay among our tribe of fisherfolk.

[16–17] "Here are roots and fruits offered by the Niṣādas, and meat both fresh and dried and a great variety of forest fare. I hope that your army will

spend the night here—we shall regale it with food. Then tomorrow, after we have honored you with all you could desire, you and your soldiers may go your way.”

Sarga 79

[1–5] When wise Bharata had been addressed in this way by Guha, the overlord of the Niṣādas, he made this reasoned and purposeful reply: “Dear friend of my *guru*, you have, in fact, already fulfilled my greatest wish, in that you are willing all on your own to show hospitality to such an army as mine.” Having spoken these excellent words in this fashion, the mighty and majestic Bharata once more addressed Guha, the overlord of the Niṣādas: “Which way should I take, Guha, to get to Bharadvāja’s ashram? This region is densely forested and the lowlands by the Ganges are hard to traverse.” Upon hearing these words of the wise prince, Guha, who ranged the dense forests, cupped his hands in reverence and replied:

[6–10] “Alert and armed with bows, the fishermen will accompany you, and so will I, glorious prince. But I trust that you are not setting out with ill will toward tireless Rāma. This huge army of yours somehow arouses my suspicions.” As Guha was addressing him in this manner, Bharata, who was as innocent as the clear, blue sky, replied in a gentle voice: “May the hour that brings such disaster never come! Please, you should harbor no suspicions about me. For Rāghava is my eldest brother and like a father to me. For I am setting forth to bring back Kākutstha, who is living in the forest. Do not imagine otherwise, Guha. I am telling you the truth.”

[11–15] His face beamed with joy when he heard what Bharata had said, and joyfully he replied to Bharata: “How blessed you are! I know of no one to equal you on the face of the earth. For although the kingship came to you effortlessly, you are prepared to give it up here and now. You are prepared to bring back Rāma when he is in such a plight, and for this you shall win everlasting fame throughout the worlds.” And as Guha was conversing with Bharata in this fashion, the sun’s light began to fade, and night came on. Once their army was encamped and Guha had provided for them generously, majestic Bharata and Śatrughna went to bed.

[16–21] But grief brought on by his brooding about Rāma troubled great Bharata, who did not deserve it, for he had always kept his eyes fixed on the way of righteousness. Rāghava was consumed with a searing inner blaze

like the fire hidden within a tree that a forest fire has scorched. From that fire of grief he broke out in sweat, and the sweat poured down his every limb, just as the Himalayas, warmed by the rays of the sun, pour down melted snow. Kaikeyī's son was crushed under a great mountain of sorrow, with its deep gorge of brooding, its minerals of heaving sighs, thickets of desolation, numberless creatures of delirium, plants and rushes of misery, and peaks of grief, care, and woe. And so high-minded Bharata, wakeful and utterly distraught, came out with his people to meet with Guha, and again Guha comforted him about his elder brother.

Sarga 80

[1–5] Guha, the ranger of the deep forests, then began to tell the exalted Bharata of great Lakṣmaṇa's fidelity: "When virtuous Lakṣmaṇa was keeping his vigil, mounting close guard over his brother, his splendid bow and arrows in his hands, I said to him: 'Here, dear boy, is a comfortable bed made ready on your behalf. Please rest easy and lie down in comfort upon it, delight of the Rāghavas. My people are all used to such hardships while you are used to comfort. Righteous prince, we will stay awake and stand guard over him. For there is no one on earth dearer to me than Rāma. Do not be anxious. Would I speak a lie to your face?

[6–10] " 'Whatever hope I may have in this world for great glory, for the full acquisition of righteousness or of simple wealth, I have by reason of his grace. And I for my part, bow in hand with all my own kinsmen, will protect my dear friend Rāma as he lies asleep with Sītā. I have wandered the forest all my life, and nothing happens here without my knowing of it. Moreover, we are prepared to withstand in battle even an army of four divisions.' When we had addressed him in this way, great Lakṣmaṇa entreated us all, with righteousness alone in view: 'How could I find sleep, or indeed any happiness in life, while Dāśarathi is lying on the ground with Sītā?

[11–16] " 'Just look at him, Guha, reposing with Sītā on the grass, a man whom all the gods and *asuras* could not withstand in battle. This is the only one of Daśaratha's sons to resemble him in every trait; a son obtained by means of great austerities and all kinds of heavy labors. With him in banishment the king will not long remain alive. The earth will surely soon be widowed. The women must have cried out their last great cries and

ceased in exhaustion. The din has surely ceased by now in the king’s palace. I have little hope that Kausalyā, the king, or my mother will live out this night. Even if my mother should live through it to look after Śatrughna, Kausalyā is so sorrowful that she, who bore this one heroic son, will perish.’

[17–22] “ ‘And my father, who never got the wish that just eluded him, who never installed Rāma in the kingship, will perish too. And when that moment comes, when Father passes away and they purify the lord of the earth with all the rites for the dead, they will have attained their object. Then they will stroll at their ease through my father’s capital, through its lovely squares and well-ordered thoroughfares; with its mansions and palaces, adorned with every precious object; with its teeming elephants, horses, chariots; sounding with the sound of musical instruments, stocked with every luxury, thronging with delighted and prosperous people, dotted with orchards and gardens, a place of crowded fairs and festivals. If only we might happily return when this period is over, to find him well and his promise fulfilled.’

[23–25] “So the night passed with the great prince standing there mourning in this fashion. Then, at daybreak, when the sun grew bright, the two of them matted their hair and went down to the bank of the Bhāgīrathī, where I had them comfortably ferried across. Their hair matted, dressed in garments of bark, carrying splendid arrows, bows, and swords, the two princes, slayers of their enemies and as powerful as bull elephants, glanced back often as they departed with Sītā.”

Sarga 81

[1–5] As soon as he heard Guha’s painful words, Bharata was plunged into agonizing thought. That delicate young man, so courageous and handsome, with the shoulders of a lion, great arms, and large lotus-shaped eyes, recovered for a moment, but then in profound distress he suddenly collapsed, like an elephant pierced to the heart by goads. Seeing Bharata in this state, Śatrughna came close to him, and as he clasped him in his embrace, he wept aloud, grief-stricken and nearly insensible. All of Bharata’s mothers flew to him then, women already haggard from fasting, desolate, and tortured by the calamity that had befallen their husband.

[6–10] Weeping, they gathered around him where he lay fallen on the ground. But Kausalyā was most distraught; she edged close to him and clasped him in her embrace. As a loving cow might nuzzle her calf, the poor woman nuzzled Bharata. Weeping and sick with grief, she asked: “My son, I trust that you have no illness that pains your body? For now the survival of this royal House depends on you. Just to see you, my son, gives me strength to live, with Rāma and his brother gone. Now that King Daśaratha has departed, you are our sole protector. I trust that you have not heard any bad news, have you, about Lakṣmaṇa or my son—the only son I have—who has gone to the forest with his wife?”

[11–15] After a moment glorious Bharata revived, and, still weeping, he comforted Kausalyā. Then he said to Guha: “Where did my brother, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa spend the night? What bed had they to sleep on, what did they eat? Please tell me, Guha.” Thus questioned, Guha, overlord of the Niṣādas, told Bharata what sorts of refreshments he had provided for Rāma, his dear and kindly guest: “I offered a variety of foods in great quantity for Rāma’s meal, cooked food and fruits of various kinds. But the truly valorous Rāma refused it all. He heeded the code of kshatriyas and would not accept it, saying:

[16–18] “ ‘It is not for us to take, my friend. Ours is always to give,’ were the words with which great Rāma entreated us, your majesty. So illustrious Rāghava only drank water, which Lakṣmaṇa brought for him, and both he and Sītā then fasted. Lakṣmaṇa had a little of the water that was left over, and all three, silently and intently, performed the evening *sandhyā* rites.

[19–23] “Afterward Saumitri himself fetched some straw and quickly made a pleasant pallet for Rāghava. Then Rāma lay down with Sītā upon the pallet, and, after washing their feet, Lakṣmaṇa withdrew. It was there, at the foot of the *iṅgudī* tree, upon that very grass that the two of them, Rāma and Sītā, slept that night. [bbb]Lakṣmaṇa, however, the slayer of enemies, strapped on palm-guards and finger guards, bound upon his back a pair of quivers filled with arrows, and, holding his great bow strung and ready, he stood nearby the whole night through. Then I too grasped my great bow and arrows, and with my unwearying kinsmen similarly armed, I came and took up my position by Lakṣmaṇa, to stand guard over the man who is the equal of great Indra.”

Sarga 82

[1–6] After listening attentively to all of this, Bharata went with his counselors to the foot of the *iṅgudī* tree, and gazing at Rāma's bed he said to all his mothers: "Here is where the great man slept on the ground that night. Here are the imprints he made. Rāma is a son of Daśaratha, that wise and illustrious king, and scion of an illustrious House. He should not have had to sleep on the bare earth. The tiger among men used to sleep on a pile of choice spreads overspread with furs. How could he sleep on the bare ground? Before, he always slept in the finest palaces, mansions, and summer houses with inlaid floors of gold and silver, amid a profusion of choice spreads, dazzling with bouquets of flowers, scented with sandalwood and aloe—rooms that looked like white clouds, echoing with the screeching of flocks of parrots.

[7–11] "He would awaken to the sound of singing and musical instruments, the jingling of gorgeous ornaments, and the beating of splendid *mṛdaṅga* drums. The panegyrists would come at their appointed hour, along with a crowd of bards and genealogists, to greet the slayer of his enemies with well-suited verses and songs of praise. No one in the world would ever have believed this; it does not seem at all real to me. My mind is in a whirl. I think I must be dreaming. Surely no divine power is mightier than fate, if Rāma Dāśarathi and his beautiful, beloved Sītā, the daughter of the king of Videha, the daughter-in-law of Daśaratha, had to sleep on the ground.

[12–17] "This is my brother's bed; this is where he tossed and turned upon the hard surface, crushing all the straw with his limbs. I imagine Sītā fell asleep on this bed that night wearing all her jewelry, for here and there you can see flakes of gold adhering. Clearly she must have caught her upper garment here that night, for silken threads can still be seen clinging. I think that sleeping beside her husband brings such pleasure that poor, faithful Maithilī, delicate though she is, felt no pain. But though Rāghava was born in a House of emperors, brings comfort to all the world, and is prized by all the world, still he gave up the highest prize, the kingship. Handsome, red-eyed, lotus-dark Rāghava was destined for pleasure and deserves no pain. How could he sleep on the ground?

[18–22] "Vaidehī truly has accomplished her highest goal in following her husband to the forest. But we, who are bereft of the great man, are all cast into uncertainty. The world has lost its helmsman, and how empty it

seems to me, with Daśaratha gone to heaven and Rāma withdrawn to the wilderness. And yet, no one even thinks to advance against our treasure-laden land, for the might of his arms protects it still, even though he is living in the forest. Though the guardposts on the ramparts of the capital stand empty, though the horses and elephants have grown unruly, the city gates stand wide open, and the army is demoralized; though the capital is unprotected, weakened, and vulnerable in its plight, our enemies dare not covet it, like food prepared with poison.

[23–27] "From this day forward I too will sleep on straw spread upon the ground, subsisting only on fruits and roots, and wearing barkcloth garments and matted hair. On his behalf, I will live with pleasure in the forest for what time remains, taking his vow upon myself so that no falsehood will attach to him. As I live there on my brother's behalf, Śatrughna shall live with me, while my noble brother protects Ayodhyā with Lakṣmaṇa. And in Ayodhyā the twice-born brahmans shall consecrate Kākutstha. If only the gods allow this wish of mine to come true! I will bow my head and beg Rāghava's grace myself in every possible way. But if he does not accede, then I will live with him as long as it takes. For if I remain in the forest, he will not be able to ignore me."

Sarga 83

[1–5] It was in that very place, on the bank of the Ganges, that Bharata Rāghava passed the night. He rose at daybreak and addressed Śatrughna: "Arise, Śatrughna, why do you lie asleep? Please fetch Guha at once, the overlord of the Niṣādas. He will ferry the army across." Exhorted in this fashion by his brother, Śatrughna replied, "I am awake. I am not sleeping but only brooding, just like you, on my noble brother." While the two lions among men were conversing in this fashion, Guha paid a timely visit to them. He cupped his hands in reverence and said to Bharata, "I trust that you spent a comfortable night on the riverbank, Kākutstha, and I trust that all is well with you and your army."

[6–10] Upon hearing Guha's affectionate inquiry, Bharata, subordinating all other considerations to Rāma, replied: "Yes, we passed the night comfortably, your majesty. You have shown us honor. Now let your fishermen ferry us across the Ganges in their many boats." When Guha heard Bharata's instructions, he hurried back to the settlement and

addressed his kinsmen, calling out: "Arise, awake, my blessings on you ever. Haul down the boats, and let us ferry the army across." As they were exhorted in this fashion, they arose in haste and, on instructions from their king, gathered five hundred boats from every direction.

[11–16] Some of them were fine boats distinguished by *svastikas* and fitted out with large bells, lovely well-built sailboats that easily caught the wind. Guha brought up one such boat, distinguished by *svastikas* and covered with a white carpet, a beautiful boat that gave out sounds of festive music. Bharata boarded it with mighty Śatrughna, Kausalyā, Sumitrā, and the other wives of the king. In advance of the women came the *purohita* and the brahman *gurus*, next the wives of the king, and then the wagons and supplies. As the men loaded equipment, set the camp ablaze, and began plunging into the ford, the noise rose up to the highest heaven. The sailboats, manned by the fishermen, flew swiftly along, transporting the people on board.

[17–23] Some boats were laden with women, others with horses, while still others transported the carts and chariots and great treasure. On reaching the further bank, the fisherfolk helped the people disembark, and as they returned they sailed their boats in lovely formations. The caparisoned elephants were urged on by their drivers, and as they made the crossing they looked like flag-topped mountains. Only some of the people were able to board the boats; others crossed on rafts, in tubs or barrels, while still others had only their arms to use. Once it had been ferried across the Ganges by the fishermen, the auspicious, many-bannered host struck out at the hour of Mitra for the great forest at Prayāga. Thus did great Bharata allow his army to encamp at its pleasure and to rest, and then he set out in the company of his sacrificial priests to visit Bharadvāja, preeminent among seers.

Sarga 84

[1–5] When the bull among men spied the ashram of Bharadvāja from only a few miles away, he ordered his whole army to a halt and proceeded with only his counselors. Knowing the ways of righteousness as he did, he laid aside his weapons and equipment, and, dressed in a pair of linen garments, he proceeded on foot, with the *purohita* Vasiṣṭha ahead of him. Then, when he caught sight of Bharadvāja, Rāghava had his counselors halt, and he advanced, following the *purohita*. The moment Bharadvāja saw Vasiṣṭha,

the great ascetic sprang from his seat, calling out to his disciples, “The guest-offering!” Bharata then did obeisance to him. Since he had come in the company of Vasiṣṭha, the seer of great blazing energy knew him to be a son of Daśaratha.

[6–9] The seer first gave the two of them the guest-offering and water to wash their feet and then some fruit. Wise in the ways of righteousness, he asked them in due order after the welfare of their House, of Ayodhyā, their army, treasury, allies, and counselors. But knowing that Daśaratha had passed away, he did not mention the king. Vasiṣṭha and Bharata then asked him in turn after his health, his sacred fires, his trees, disciples, birds, and beasts. Bharadvāja assured them that all were well, but then, in his abiding affection for Rāghava, the great ascetic addressed Bharata:

[10–13] “What is your purpose in coming here when you should be ruling the kingdom? Explain this to me fully, for my mind is uneasy about it. The son whom Kausalyā bore, a slayer of his enemies and the increaser of her delight, has been banished for a long time to the forest with his wife and brother. They say that his father, acting on the orders of a woman, ordered the illustrious prince with the words, ‘You are to become a forest hermit for fourteen years.’ I trust that you have no intention of harming this innocent man and his younger brother, thinking thereby to enjoy unchallenged kingship.”

[14–18] When he was addressed in this way by Bharadvāja, and, his eyes flooded with tears, Bharata replied to him in a voice breaking with sorrow: “I am lost if even the blessed one thinks such a thing of me! Oh, do not suspect evil of me, do not rebuke me like this. I never wanted what my mother demanded on my behalf. It gives me no satisfaction, and I will never accede to her demand. Instead, I am on my way to beg forgiveness of the tiger among men, to do obeisance at his feet, and to bring him back to Ayodhyā. That is the reason I have come—believe me, blessed one. Please show me your grace and tell me the present whereabouts of Rāma, the lord of the earth.”

[19–22] Bharadvāja then graciously replied to Bharata: “Such behavior toward your *guru*, such restraint and adherence to the ways of the virtuous, become you, tiger among men, as a son of the Rāghava dynasty. I already knew what was in your heart and only questioned you to hear it openly confirmed and to see your fame magnified to the highest degree. Your

brother is living on the great mountain Citrakūṭa. Tomorrow you shall go to that place, but stay here tonight with your counselors. Grant me this desire, wise prince, for you are mindful of the desires and needs of others." Prince Bharata, a man of noble vision, was overjoyed and replied, "So be it." For he had made up his mind that he would indeed spend the night in that great ashram.

Sarga 85

[1–5] Once Bharata, son of Kaikeyī, had made up his mind to spend the night there, the sage offered him hospitality. Bharata replied to him: "But surely you have already done so. The water for washing our feet and the guest-offering are all the hospitality appropriate to the forest." With a slight smile, Bharadvāja said to Bharata: "I know you are agreeable and would be satisfied with anything. But it is for your army that I wish to make provision. This would give me pleasure, and you yourself, bull among mortals, deserve no less. But for what reason did you leave your army so far away before coming here? Why did you not approach together with the army, bull among men?"

[6–10] His hands cupped in reverence, Bharata replied to the ascetic: "Blessed one, I did not approach with my army for fear of the blessed one. Spirited horses, men, and huge rutting elephants follow in my train, blessed one, covering a vast expanse. I was afraid they would damage the land and water, the trees and leaf huts of the ashram, and therefore I came alone." But when the great seer instructed him, "Please bring the army here," Bharata accordingly had the army advance. Bharadvāja then entered the fire-sanctuary, sipped water, and wiped his mouth. He then invoked the divine craftsman Viśvakarman in order to provide the hospitality.

[11–15] "I invoke the divine craftsmen Viśvakarman and Tvaṣṭṛ; for it is my intention to provide hospitality, and to this end let them make these arrangements for me: Let the rivers flowing eastward and flowing westward, on earth and in the sky, now come together from wherever they may be. Let some of them flow with *maireya* wine, and some with long-aged wine, others with cool water tasting like the juice of sugarcane. And I invoke the *gandharvas* of the gods, Viśvāvasu, Haha, Huhu, as well as the divine *apsaras* and the *gandharva* women wherever they may be—Ghṛtācī, Viśvācī, Miśrakeśī, Alambusā. In addition, I invoke the beautiful women

who wait on Śakra and those who wait on Brahmā. All these do I invoke to come with Tumburu and with all their trappings.

[16–18] "[ccc]Let the heavenly forest of Kubera, god of wealth, come from the land of the Kurus, the forest whose foliage is raiment and jewelry, and which constantly bears fruit in the form of heavenly women. Let the blessed moon come and provide me with the most exquisite food, solid and soft, and things to suck and lick, in great variety and quantity; many-colored garlands too, dropping from the trees, wine and every other type of drink, and meats of different sorts."

[19–24] Thus did the sage speak in his deep concentration, incomparable power, and ascetic energy, his words accented in full accord with the rules of proper articulation. As he continued rapt in meditation, facing east, his hands cupped in reverence, one by one all those heavenly things began to appear. A soft breeze began to blow, with a faint touch of the spice hills of Malaya and Dardura, a most pleasant, comforting, and auspicious breeze that banished one's sweat. Heavenly clouds rolled in, showering blossoms, and in every direction could be heard the beating of the drums of the gods. Gentle winds began to blow, troupes of *apsarases* danced, the *gandharvas* of the gods sang, and their lutes gave forth notes. The sound they sent up carried to heaven and over the earth to the ears of the people, a smooth and even sound with graceful rhythm.

[25–29] The heavenly sound charmed the ears of the men, and when it faded away, Bharata's army beheld the creations of Viśvakarman. The ground had been leveled out all around to a distance of five leagues, and luxuriant lawns carpeted it, glistening like sapphire or cat's-eye beryl. *Bilva* trees sprang up on it, as did *kapittha*, *panasa*, *bījapūraka*, *āmalaka*, and mango trees, all adorned with fruit. From the land of the northern Kurus came the forest with its heavenly delights and a heavenly river with trees densely covering its banks. Splendid four-room houses suddenly appeared, stables for the horses and elephants, clusters of castles and mansions, and lovely archways.

[30–35] There was a royal palace that looked like a silvery cloud. It had a grand archway and was beautified with white garlands and perfumed with heavenly fragrances. It was four-cornered and spacious, complete with couches, chairs, and carriages, provisioned with heavenly delights to suit every taste, with heavenly delicacies and garments. It was stocked with all

manner of food, with utensils polished spotlessly, seats properly arranged for everyone, and a magnificent couch with a sumptuous spread. It was a majestic residence filled with treasures, and with the permission of the great seer, great-armed Bharata, son of Kaikeyī, entered it. Behind him followed all the counselors and the *purohita*, and they rejoiced to see the arrangements provided in the residence. There was a heavenly throne in it, a fan, and a parasol, and, with his ministers, Bharata approached as if the king were there.

[36–40] He paid homage to the throne, prostrating himself before Rāma, and taking up the yak-tail fly whisk, he sat down upon a minister's seat. Then all the others sat down in due order, the counselors and the *purohita*, next the chief of the army, and finally the palace supervisor. At Bharadvāja's command, rivers with rice pudding in place of mud instantly sprang up before Bharata. Along either bank of the rivers, lovely heavenly dwellings plastered with white clay were produced by the grace of that brahman. And at the very same instant there appeared twenty thousand women sent by Brahmā, decked out with heavenly jewelry.

[41–45] And then twenty thousand more women came, sent by Kubera, all adorned with coral, gold, gems, and pearls. And from the heavenly Nandana garden came a troupe of twenty thousand *apsarases* who could madden with passion any man they took in their arms. The kings of the *gandharvas*—Nārada, Tumburu, Gopa, Parvata, Sūryavarcasa—then began to sing in the presence of Bharata, while before him danced Alambusā, Miśrakeśī, Puṇḍarīkā, and Vāmanā, at Bharadvāja's command. All the garlands to be found among the gods and in the heavenly Caitraratha forest appeared there at Prayāga at Bharadvāja's command.

[46–50] Through the ascetic power of Bharadvāja, and the the *bilva* trees turned into drummers and *aśvattha* trees became dancers, with *vibhītaka* trees beating the time. *Sarala*, *tāla*, *tilaka*, and *naktamālaka* trees massed together in delight, having become hunchbacks or dwarfs. *Śiṃśapā*, *āmalakī*, and *jambū* trees and all the vines of the woodlands assumed the form of women and took up their dwelling in Bharadvāja's ashram. Then they all cried out: "Here is wine to drink for all who drink wine! Here is rice pudding for those who are hungry and succulent meat to eat, as much as you desire!" [ddd]Those women then massaged the men with oil and bathed them at the murmuring riverbanks, fifteen women for every single man.

[51–55] The lovely, bright-eyed ladies approached and massaged the men, and, after drying them off, they gave each other things to drink. Even the draft animals of the great Ikṣvāku soldiers—the horses, elephants, donkeys, camels, and oxen, the sons of Surabhi—were fed with sugarcane and sweet barley by strong men who bade them eat. For no horseman paid attention to his horse, nor did an elephant driver his elephant; for the whole army was delirious with drink and pleasure. Their every desire gratified, anointed with red sandalwood paste, the soldiers shouted out from where they lay with the troupes of *apsarases*: "We will neither go back to Ayodhyā nor on to the Daṇḍakas! May Bharata fare well, and let Rāma find happiness as well!"

[56–60] Indeed that is what the foot soldiers shouted, as well as the cavalrymen and trainers of the elephants and horses; for after such a reception they recognized no master. By the thousands the men of Bharata's retinue roared in delight and cried out, "This is heaven!" And no sooner would they finish some ambrosial treat than they would glance at the other heavenly foods and turn their thoughts once more to eating. The female servants and slave girls, the wives and women accompanying the army all found themselves dressed in fresh garments, and they too wanted for nothing. The elephants, donkeys, and camels, the cows and horses, and even the wild birds and beasts as well were well cared for, and no one had to provide for any of them.

[61–65] There was not a man to be seen whose garments were not sparkling white, nor one who was hungry or dirty or whose hair was begrimed with dust. To their amazement the men beheld thousands of metal pots crowned with flowers and banners, filled to the brim with white rice, goat and boar meat, with mounds of choice condiments and fragrant, flavorful soups prepared from fruit stock. Along the edges of the forest were wells thick with rice pudding in place of mud; there were wish-fulfilling cows too, and trees dripping with honey. There were pools filled with *maireya* wine and ringed about with mounds of savory meats prepared in steaming cauldrons—venison, peacock, and chicken.

[66–72] There were thousands of platters made of gold, and well-fired trays and jars and jugs filled with curds. There were ponds filled with buttermilk scented with fresh yellow *kapittha* fruit, filled with white curds or porridge, and there were mounds of sugar. At the bathing places on the

river the men beheld ointments and fragrant powders and bathing requisites, all stored in containers. There were stacks of toothbrushes, white and bristled, white sandalwood ointment packed in vials, and sparkling clean mirrors. There were piles of clothing and pairs of shoes and sandals by the thousands. There were collyrium boxes, combs, and brushes; parasols, bows, and shining armor; couches and chairs. [eee]There were full streams for watering the donkeys, camels, elephants, and horses, and streams just right for bathing, with lovely landings, lotuses, and water lilies.

[73–77] On every side the troops saw mounds of soft barley-grass the color of sapphire or cat's-eye beryl for strewing before their animals. The men were lost in wonder at the sight of the marvelous hospitality—like something in a dream—that the great seer provided for Bharata. And while they were enjoying themselves like this in Bharadvāja's lovely ashram, just like the gods in the Nandana garden, the night slipped away. Then the rivers, the *gandharvas*, and all the lovely women took their leave of Bharadvāja and returned just as they had come. But the men were still drunk and wild with liquor, still anointed with the heavenly unguents of aloe and sandalwood, and the heavenly garlands were still there, the various splendid garlands, though now in disarray and crushed by the men.

Sarga 86

[1–8] After passing the night with such hospitality shown to him, Bharata went with his escort and of his own accord approached Bharadvāja. Bharadvāja had just completed his *agnihotra* rites when he observed that Bharata, tiger among men, had come with his hands cupped in reverence. The seer addressed him: "I trust you spent a pleasant night here in our domain. Were your people content with the hospitality? Please tell me, blameless prince." The supremely powerful seer then strode from his ashram, and Bharata, his hands cupped in reverence, prostrated himself and replied: "I, my ministers, and all my army, and even our draft animals have passed the night quite pleasantly, blessed holy one. You have gratified most amply our every desire. We have been well fed and well housed, and our fatigue and pain have been allayed. Indeed, all of us, the servants included, have passed the night most pleasantly. And although I must now bid you farewell, blessed one, foremost of seers, please turn a friendly eye upon me as I set out to find my brother. Please direct me to the ashram of my great

and righteous brother. Tell me which road to take, righteous seer, and how far I must go.”

[9–13] Questioned in this fashion, Bharadvāja, the great and mighty ascetic, answered Bharata, who was yearning for the sight of his brother: “Bharata, at a distance of two and a half leagues through the desolate forest stands Mount Citrakūṭa, a place of lovely caverns and woodlands. Along its northern flank runs the Mandākinī River, thickly bordered with flowering trees and lovely flowering woodlands. [fff]Their leaf hut must be standing between the river and Mount Citrakūṭa, my son. I am certain the two of them are living there. Illustrious lord of the army, if you lead your army of elephants, horses, and chariots by way of the southern road, keeping toward the southwest, you will soon see Rāghava.”

[14–16] Now, when the wives of the king of kings heard that they were about to depart, they left their fine carriages—the fine carriages they always deserved—and crowded around the brahman Bharadvāja. Trembling, haggard, and desolate, Kausalyā, along with Queen Sumitrā, grasped the sage’s feet with her hands. Kaikeyī, her every desire now thwarted, an object of contempt to all the world, was overcome with shame as she too grasped his feet.

[17–25] Reverently she circled the great and holy sage and with a desolate heart stood apart, not far from Bharata. Then Bharadvāja, a sage strict in his vows, made a request of Bharata: “I should like to make the acquaintance of your mothers individually, Rāghava.” Having been addressed in this fashion by Bharadvāja, the righteous and eloquent Bharata cupped his hands in reverence and uttered these words: “This woman whom you see, holy one, who is like a goddess though desolate now and haggard with grief and fasting, is Kausalyā, my father’s chief queen. It is she who bore Rāma, the tiger among men who moves with the gait of a lion, just as Aditi bore Dhātṛ. The woman holding her by the left arm, with as wretched a look as a *karṇikāra* branch stripped of its blossoms in the heart of the forest, is the queen whose sons are the mighty and valorous princes, godlike Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna. And she on whose account the two tigers among men went away dead in life, on whose account King Daśaratha was bereft of his sons and so went to heaven—behold her, the power-hungry Kaikeyī, an ignoble woman in a noblewoman’s guise, a vicious and malevolent

person—my mother, and the one in whom I see this great calamity of mine to have its source.”

[26–30] Having said this in a voice choked with tears and his eyes reddened, the tiger among men heaved sighs again and again like an angry snake. When Bharata had finished speaking, the great and wise seer Bharadvāja replied with words of great import: “Bharata, you must not impute any fault to Kaikeyī. The banishment of Rāma will turn out to be a great blessing.” Bharata then did obeisance and received the sage’s benediction, and, after reverently circling and taking leave of him, he commanded the army, “Make ready!” The various groups of people then harnessed the many heavenly horse-drawn chariots with fittings of gold, and they boarded, eager to be off.

[31–36] The elephant bulls and cows, girded with gold, their pennants flying, set forth with a rumble, like clouds at the end of summer. The various vehicles set forth, large ones and small ones and some of great value, while the foot soldiers marched forth on foot. Eager to see Rāma, the women, with Kausalyā at their head, set forth cheerfully in their splendid carriages. A handsome palanquin was standing ready, resplendent as the morning sun, and majestic Bharata got in and set forth with his escort. Teeming with elephants, horses, and chariots, the great army, like a massive lofty cloud, set forth, turning southward, traversing stretches of forest alive with birds and beasts. Its soldiers, elephants, and horses all excited, and terrifying the flocks of birds and beasts as it plunged into the great forest, the army of Bharata made a splendid sight.

Sarga 87

[1–5] As the great many-bannered army was making its way, the rutting bull elephants that lived in the forest were terrified and ran off with their herds. So, too, were the apes and droves of chitals and black antelopes that were everywhere to be seen in the stretches of the forest, on the mountains, and at the riverbanks. The righteous son of Daśaratha happily proceeded in the company of his great and clamorous army of four divisions. Great Bharata’s army, which resembled the ocean’s flood, covered the earth, just as the clouds in the rainy season cover the sky. For the earth was inundated with a flood of swift horses and elephants, and for a long time it disappeared altogether from sight.

[6–10] Majestic Bharata had covered a great distance, and his mounts had grown weary when he addressed Vasiṣṭha, the best of counselors: “We have clearly come to the region of which Bharadvāja spoke. The scene that appears before us is just as I heard it described. Here are Mount Citrakūṭa and the Mandākinī River, and there, in the distance, the forest can be seen, blue-black as a storm cloud. Even now my elephants, mountainlike themselves, are trampling the lovely slopes of Mount Citrakūṭa. The trees upon the mountain slopes are shedding their blossoms, as blue-black water-laden clouds shed water when the heat of summer is over.

[11–15] “Just look at the mountain, Śatrughna. It is a place where *kinnaras* roam, and now the horses are swarming over it like dolphins through the ocean. Startled herds of deer are swiftly darting off—they look like banks of clouds in the sky shredded by the autumnal wind. The trees, with their cloud-dark branches and the fragrant flower-chaplets they wear upon their crowns, look like the men of the south. The forest had been still and dreadful in appearance, but now, with all these throngs of people, it seems like Ayodhyā to me. The dust kicked up by hooves had hung, obscuring the sky, but a breeze has come and quickly dispelled it, as if to do me a kindness.

[16–20] “And see, Śatrughna, how the master charioteers drive the horse-drawn carriages and how they fly along so swiftly through the woodlands. And look now how those lovely peacocks are frightened and scurrying off to the mountain, the dwelling place of birds. This seems to me to be a perfectly charming spot, clearly a place where ascetics would live—it is like the very pathway to heaven. The many charming chitals with their mates in the forest appear as if they were speckled with blossoms. Come, let the soldiers set out and search the woodland, to see if those tigers among men, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, are anywhere to be found.”

[21–27] Upon hearing Bharata’s order, warriors with weapons in hand entered the forest and soon caught sight of smoke. When they spied that column of smoke, they returned and reported it to Bharata, saying: “Where there is fire there must be men. Clearly the two Rāghavas are somewhere nearby. Then again, those tigers among men, the two enemy-scorching princes, may not be here, but others clearly are, ascetics like Rāma.” Hearing these just and reasonable words, Bharata, crusher of enemy armies, addressed all the soldiers: “Remain here, gentlemen, and be on the alert; let

no one go on ahead. I myself shall go with Sumantra and our *guru*.” Thus ordered, they all stood around where they were, while Bharata directed his gaze toward the column of smoke. The army too, from where Bharata had made them halt, gazed at the smoke that rose before them and felt delight, thinking it would not be long before they rejoined their beloved Rāma.

Sarga 88

[1–6] Now, during the long time that godlike Dāśarathi had been living on the mountain, he had grown to love the mountains and the forest. Once, eager to please Vaidehī and beguile his own mind, he showed his wife around wonderful Citrakūṭa, as Indra, smasher of citadels, might show his wife, Śacī. He said to her: “Neither my expulsion from the kingdom, my dear, nor being apart from my loved ones pains my heart while I am viewing this lovely mountain. Just look at that mountain, my dear, home to flocks of many different birds, with its peaks—adorned with veins of minerals—rising almost to the sky. Some shine like silver, while others are as red as blood. Others still are tinted yellow, and some are as red as madder. Some sparkle like the finest gems while others gleam like topaz, crystal, or the blossoms of the *ketaka* tree. Yet others shine like stars or quicksilver. Adorned with minerals, all the regions of the lord of mountains are radiant.

[7–12] “What a sight the mountain makes, swarming with birds and teeming with herds of deer as well as groups of leopards, hyenas, and apes, all of them tame. Trees in fruit and blossom, shady and enchanting, cover the mountain and heighten its majesty. There are mangoes, *jambūs*, *asanas*, *lodhras*, *priyālas*, *panasas*, *dhavas*, *aṅkolas*, *bhavya*, *tiniśas*, *bilvas*, *tindukas*, *kāśmarīs*, *ariṣṭas*, *madhūkas*, *tilakas*, *badarīs*, *āmalakas*, *nīpas*, *dhanvanas*, and *bījakas*, as well as reeds and canes. See there, my dear, on the lovely hillsides are some spirited *kinnaras*, impassioned with desire and pairing off to make love. And look over there, where those swords and delicate garments are hanging from the branches: those are the enchanting pleasure-bowers of the *vidyādhara* women.

[13–18] “What a sight the mountain makes with its waterfalls, one here, one there, and with its springs and running streams—it is like an elephant streaming with ichor. The breeze out of the grottoes bears the fragrance of different flowers and approaches with such pleasing redolence—what man

would it not gladden? If I might live here all the years to come with you, my flawless wife, and with Lakṣmaṇa, I would never feel the searing pain of grief. For I delight in this lovely mountain, my beautiful wife, with its magnificent peaks where fruits and flowers are so abundant and many different birds come flocking. And my living in the forest has brought me a twofold reward: my father has discharged his debt to righteousness, and Bharata has been pleased as well. Vaidehī, I trust that you too take delight in being with me on Citrakūṭa, with so many different marvels before your eyes to experience, to contemplate and talk about?

[19–21] "Living in the forest—as the royal seers of old, my ancestors, used to say—is the real nectar of immortality for kings and leads to their well-being after death. How beautiful the rocks of the mountain are, massive rocks, hundreds of them all around, so many and so colorful—blue-black, yellow, white, and pink. At night the plants growing on the lordly mountain look like tongues of fire, eater of oblations, blazing by the thousands in the beauty of their own luster.

[22–27] "Some parts of the mountain, my lovely, look like dwelling places or gardens, while others are sheer rock. As if having split open the earth, Citrakūṭa stands forth. Its peak seems auspicious in every way. There you can see the sumptuous beds of lovers, spread with leaves of the *kuṣṭha*, *puṃnāga*, *tagara*, and *bhūrja* and interspersed with lotus petals. Their lotus garlands can be seen too, cast aside now by the lovers and crushed. And there, my beloved, look at all those different fruits. So rich in fruits, roots, and water is Mount Citrakūṭa that it almost surpasses Vasvaukasārā, Nalinī, or the land of the northern Kurus. Passing this time with you, my beloved Sītā, and with Lakṣmaṇa will be a pleasure to me, and one that fosters the righteousness of my House, for I shall be keeping to the path of the virtuous with the utmost self-restraint."

Sarga 89

[1–5] Then the lord of Kosala, making his way down the mountain, showed Maithilī where the clear waters of the lovely Mandākinī River ran. Lotus-eyed Rāma said to the daughter of the king of Videha, his broad-hipped wife with a face as fair as the moon: "Just look at the lovely Mandākinī River with its sparkling sandbanks, the *haṃsas* and *sārasa* cranes that make their home there, the flowers embellishing it, the fruiting and blossoming

trees of every sort that grow thick upon its banks. Wherever one looks it shimmers like Nalinī, the lake of Kubera, king of kings. Herds of animals have drunk here, and though the bathing places are turbid now, they are lovely still and give me much pleasure.

[6–10] “Over there some seers wearing hides, matted hair, and upper garments of barkcloth are immersing themselves in the Mandākinī River, my beloved, for it is the appointed hour. Those others are sages who take rigorous vows and worship the sun, my large-eyed wife, with their arms held high in self-mortification. As the wind buffets the treetops and they strew their leaves and flowers all about the river, the mountain seems almost to be dancing. And look at the Mandākinī River there, where its water flows crystal clear, and there, where its sandy beaches stretch out, and over there, where perfected beings crowd about it. And just look at the flowers the wind has shaken off and massed into drifts, or those others bobbing in the middle of the water.

[11–14] “Those sweet-voiced birds are *rathāṅgas*, my precious, the ones alighting on the drifts of flowers and uttering their pleasant cries. To set one’s eyes on Citrakūṭa and the Mandākinī, my lovely, is far better than living in the town—in your eyes too, I think. Come plunge with me into the river. Its waters, as always, are agitated only by perfected beings, men cleansed of all impurities and endowed with ascetic power, self-restraint, and tranquility. Plunge into the Mandākinī, my lovely Sītā, as if it were an old friend of yours, submerging the lotuses and water lilies.

[15–19] “Always just think of the wild animals as the townsfolk, my beloved, the mountain as Ayodhyā, and this river as the Sarayū. You both bring me such joy, both righteous Lakṣmaṇa, who attends to my orders, and you, Vaidehī, who are so agreeable. Being here with you, bathing at the time of the three oblations, and eating sweet fruits and roots, I no longer yearn either for Ayodhyā or the kingship. [ggg]The man does not exist who would not find repose and happiness beholding this river, the herds of elephants that stir it up, the lions, monkeys, and elephants that come to drink its water, and the blossoming trees in full bloom that lend it such adornment.” So Rāma, heir of the Raghu dynasty, spoke with his beloved about the river, fondly and at length, as he went strolling over lovely Citrakūṭa, a very balm to the eye.

Sarga 90

[1–4] Now, as Rāma was sitting there, he perceived the noise and the dust—they reached to heaven—of Bharata's approaching army. The wild bull elephants, meanwhile, were frightened by the deafening noise, and in panic they and their herds ran, scattering in every direction. Rāghava heard the noise made by the army and noticed all the elephants fleeing. And watching them run off, and listening to the din, Rāma addressed Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri, a man of blazing power:

[5–10] "Ho there, Lakṣmaṇa! You worthy son of Sumitrā, go and take a look. A tumultuous clamor has broken out, awesome and as deep as thunder. Perhaps a king or royal officer is moving through the forest hunting. Or it could be something else, perhaps an animal. Please find out, Saumitri, find out as quickly as you can exactly what this all might be." Lakṣmaṇa hurriedly climbed a flowering *sāla* tree, and peering about in every direction, he cast his glance to the east. Craning his neck and peering out, he saw a vast army, a mass of chariots, horses, and elephants, and foot soldiers among them on the alert. He informed Rāma about the army, teeming with horses and elephants and decked out with the battle standards on its chariots, and then he said this: "Put out the fire, brother, and let Sītā get to a cave. String your bow and take up your arrows and armor!"

[11–15] Rāma, tiger among men, replied to Lakṣmaṇa, "Very well, but you should consider first, Saumitri: Whose army do you think this might be?" But though he was addressed in this way by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa replied to Rāma as if he were a raging fire eager to consume the army. He said: "Clearly, now that Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī, has secured the consecration to the kingship he has been longing for, he is coming to kill the two of us! There, in fact, is the lofty, spreading, and majestic *kovidāra* tree, his battle standard, coming into view, shining brilliantly atop his chariot. There are men mounted on speeding horses drawing close at will, and how excited those riders look mounted on their elephants.

[16–20] "Let us take our bows and fall back to the mountain, my mighty brother, or make our stand right here, armed for battle with our weapons at the ready. If only the *kovidāra* battle standard would come within our range in battle! If only I could catch sight of Bharata, the cause of the great calamity that has befallen you, Rāghava, Sītā, and me. Your enemy has arrived, mighty Rāghava, he who brought about your expulsion from the

ancient kingship. It is Bharata, and I will kill him. I see no wrong, Rāghava, in slaying Bharata. No unrighteousness comes from ridding oneself of a man who was first to give offense. When he has been struck down, you shall rule the whole treasure-laden earth. If only that power-hungry woman Kaikeyī could see her son killed by me today in combat—like a tree felled by an elephant—and feel the anguish of bitter sorrow.

[21–25] "But no, I will slay Kaikeyī too, and her supporters and kinsmen. Let the earth be cleansed today of this foul scum! Today, O giver of honor, I will cast out upon the enemy army my pent-up wrath and our dishonor, like fire, the eater of oblations, upon dry grass. This very day I will rend the enemies' bodies with my sharp arrows, and spatter the woodlands of Citrakūṭa with their blood. And when my arrows have rent the hearts of their elephants and horses, let wild beasts drag them off, and the men too, when I have cut them down. [hhh]I have always discharged my debt to my bow and arrows in great battles, and I have no doubt I shall again in destroying Bharata and all his army."

Sarga 91

[1–5] In order to calm Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri, who was so violently agitated and almost insensible with rage, Rāma spoke these words: "What need is there of a bow or sword and shield when it is the great archer, wise Bharata himself, who is coming? This is an appropriate time for Bharata to wish to see us. He would not do us any harm, nor even contemplate it. When has Bharata ever opposed you, or made you any such threat that you should now have these suspicions of him? You must not speak disparagingly or abusively of Bharata. It is I who would be abused were any abuse directed against him.

[6–9] "How, after all, could a son kill his father, whatever the extremity, or a brother his brother, Saumitri, his very own breath of life? If it is for the sake of the kingship that you are saying these things, I shall tell Bharata when I see him, 'Hand over the kingship to him, to Lakṣmaṇa.' For were I plainly to tell him, Lakṣmaṇa, 'Offer him the kingship,' Bharata's only response would be, 'Of course.' " So spoke his righteous brother, whose welfare was his one concern, and Lakṣmaṇa seemed almost to shrink into himself for shame.

[10–13] Rāghava noticed Lakṣmaṇa's chagrin and once again addressed him: "I think the great-armed prince has come here only to visit us. Or perhaps he wants to take Vaidehī home. He may have had second thoughts about her staying in the forest, a woman used to every comfort. There you can see the team of splendid horses, my mighty brother, those thoroughbred, magnificent swift horses, in speed like the rushing wind. And there is Śatruṃjaya, our wise father's aged and massive elephant, lumbering at the head of the army."

[14–17] Climbing down from the top of the *sāla* tree, Lakṣmaṇa, champion in battle, came and stood at Rāma's side, his hands cupped in reverence. Now, acting on Bharata's order, "Let there be no disturbance," the army had encamped all around the mountain. For a league and a half along the slope of the mountain the Ikṣvāku army encamped with its throngs of elephants, horses, and chariots. The army made a brilliant sight when Bharata had marshaled it there on Citrakūṭa the day he came, shedding his pride and honoring the claims of righteousness, to conciliate the delight of the Raghus with all the diplomacy at his command.

Sarga 92

[1–5] After encamping his army, lordly Bharata, the best of men who walk the earth, set out walking to find Kākutstha, who was a *guru* to him. As soon as the army was duly encamped as he had instructed, Bharata addressed his brother Śatrughna: "Dear boy, you must at once explore the whole extent of the forest, with parties of our men and these huntsmen to accompany you. For I shall find no peace until I see Rāma, powerful Lakṣmaṇa, and illustrious Vaidehī. No, I shall find no peace until I see the lovely moonlike face of my brother and his eyes like lotus petals.

[6–10] "I shall find no peace until I bow my head to my brother's feet, which bear all the signs of sovereignty. I shall find no peace until he assumes, as he deserves, his position in the kingship of our fathers and forefathers, with the consecration water moist upon his head. Illustrious Vaidehī, the daughter of Janaka, has fulfilled herself by following her husband, master of the ocean-girdled earth. How blessed is Citrakūṭa, this mountain equal to Himalaya, king of mountains, where Rāma is living like Kubera in the Nandana garden. This trackless forest, the haunt of wild

beasts, has fulfilled itself as well, to have become the dwelling place of Rāma, the best of all who bear arms.”

[11–15] Having said this, mighty Bharata, bull among men, set out on foot into the great forest. The eloquent prince made his way through the thickets growing on the mountain slopes, their treetops all in blossom. Then, upon reaching the flowering *sāla* tree atop Mount Citrakūṭa, he spied the smoke, the towering banner of the fire burning in Rāma’s ashram. Majestic Bharata and his kinsmen rejoiced to see it, and, thinking, “Rāma must be here,” the prince felt as if at last he had reached the farther shore of an ocean. Perceiving Rāma’s ashram and the holy men there on Mount Citrakūṭa, great Bharata hurried off with Guha after again encamping his army.

Sarga 93

[1–5] Now, once the army was encamped, Bharata set out, longing to see his brother, pointing out the way for Śatrughna. After having first instructed the seer Vasiṣṭha, “Please bring my mothers at once,” he himself hurried on ahead, in his deep love for his *guru* Rāma. Sumantra likewise followed close behind Śatrughna, for his burning desire to see Rāma again was not less than Bharata’s. Majestic Bharata advanced and soon could see his brother’s thatched leaf hut situated within an ascetic’s retreat. In front of the lodge Bharata saw the split firelogs and the flowers that had been gathered.

[6–12] And nearby in the forest he saw the dry dung of deer and buffalo heaped up in great mounds as fuel for use against the cold. As brilliant, great-armed Bharata proceeded, he excitedly said to Śatrughna and the ministers all around him: “I think we must have reached the spot Bharadvāja spoke of. I believe that the Mandākinī River cannot be far from here. This must be the trail, for above strips of bark have been fastened. Lakṣmaṇa must have marked it for traveling at night. And that other one must be a path beaten on the mountain slope by the huge-tusked elephants charging and trumpeting at one another. Over there you can see the thick smoke from black-trailed fire; it is customary for ascetics to maintain a fire continuously in the forest. It is here that I shall experience the joy of seeing my noble brother Rāghava, who is living like a great seer in order to honor his *guru*, his father.”

[13–16] Bharata Rāghava continued on and soon reached the place where Citrakūṭa meets the Mandākinī. He addressed the people with him: "The tiger among men must sit cross-legged on the ground rapt in the heroic posture—the lord of all the people in this unpeopled place. A curse on me that I was born and that I live! It is on my account that this calamity has befallen brilliant Rāghava, the master of the world. He has had to renounce all pleasures and make his dwelling in the forest. And thus I am condemned by all the world. But now I will go and beg for forgiveness from Rāma and Sītā; I will throw myself down again and again at their feet."

[17–22] Even as the son of Daśaratha was lamenting in this fashion, he saw a large, enchanting, and holy leaf hut in the forest, densely thatched with *sāla*, *tāla*, and *aśvakarṇa* leaves. It was a spacious hut with soft *kuśa* grass spread about, like an altar at a sacred rite. Bows adorned it, gleaming like rainbows, heavy, sturdy, and backed with gold, of a sort that could rout any foe. Arrows flashing like sunbeams adorned it too, like the serpents adorning Bhogavatī, awesome arrows packed in quivers, with heads blazing. A pair of swords in golden scabbards shed a luster over the hut, and two shields lent their adornment, brilliantly embossed with gold. Brilliant forearm-guards and finger guards studded with gold were hanging there too. It was a place as impregnable to enemy hosts as a lion's cave is to deer.

[23–27] [iii]Bharata saw there a holy altar in Rāma's residence, broad and sloping to the northeast, with a blazing fire upon it. Glancing about for a moment, Bharata suddenly spied his *guru* Rāma seated in the thatched cottage, wearing a crown of matted hair. He saw Rāma seated there, dressed in a black antelope hide and barkcloth garment. He was the image of fire, the purifier, in every respect, with the shoulders of a lion, great arms, and lotus-petal eyes—the righteous master of all the ocean-girdled earth. As he sat together with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa upon the ground strewn with *darbha* grass, he resembled the eternal Brahmā.

[28–32] When majestic Bharata saw him, both sorrow and confusion overwhelmed him at once, and righteous Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī, went running to him. The mere sight of Rāma anguished him, and he lamented in a voice choked with tears. He could hardly endure it, and yet he steadied himself to say: "The man to whom his subjects in the assembly should

rightly be paying homage, my elder brother, is sitting here receiving the homage of wild beasts. The man who in the past was accustomed to clothes worth many thousands, here he is, the great man, wearing deerskins in the performance of righteousness. How can Rāghava bear this burden of matted hair, when he used to wear a chaplet of many-colored flowers of every kind?

[33–37] "The man who should rightly be gaining abundant merit through sacrifices performed according to precept now seeks it by mortifying his body. It had always been precious sandalwood paste that coated my noble brother's limbs. How is it possible they are now coated with dirt? It is my fault that this misery has befallen Rāma, who had previously known nothing but happiness. A curse on my life, vile creature that I am, an object of scorn to all the world!" Lamenting thus in his desolation, his lotus face breaking out in sweat, Bharata collapsed weeping before he could reach Rāma's feet. Consumed with sorrow, the powerful prince Bharata exclaimed in desolation, "Elder brother!" but could say nothing further.

[38–41] He glanced at glorious Rāma, and with his voice choked with tears he cried out again, "Elder brother!" but was unable to utter anything more. Śatrughna was weeping too, as he prostrated himself at Rāma's feet. And as Rāma embraced the two of them, he shed tears as well. The two princes, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, then met with Sumantra and Guha there in the wilderness just as might the sun, maker of day, and the moon, maker of night, with the planets Venus and Jupiter in the sky. And even the inhabitants of the forest as they watched the princes, men like bull elephants, reunited there in the vast wilderness, lost all delight as well, and all burst into tears.

Sarga 94

[1–5] Rāma drew Bharata to his breast, embraced him, and kissed him on the forehead. Then, taking Bharata on his lap, he questioned him closely: "What has become of your father, dear boy, that you have come to the wilderness? While he yet lives you should not be going off to the forest. It has been a long time, indeed, since I have seen you, Bharata, who have now come from so far into this wilderness. But why have you come to the forest, dear boy, looking so somber? I trust that King Daśaratha is in good health, still true to his given word, still performing *rājasūya* and *aśvamedha*

sacrifices, and deciding points of law. And I trust, dear boy, that proper homage is still being paid to the wise and brilliant brahman, the preceptor of the Ikṣvākus, who is constant in righteousness.

[6–10] "I trust, dear boy, that Kausalyā is happy and also Sumitrā, the mother of such good children. I trust too that noble Queen Kaikeyī is rejoicing as well. I trust that you still honor your *purohita*, a highborn man, learned and disciplined, who gives instruction ungrudgingly. I trust that you have appointed a man to tend your sacred fires who is sagacious and upright and knows the ritual precepts. And I trust that he always informs you in a timely fashion both before and after the oblations have been offered. I trust further that you continue to hold the preceptor Sudhanvan in esteem, dear brother. He is expert in the most formidable arrows and missiles, and a master of the science of statecraft. I trust too, dear brother, that you have made brave men your counselors, men you look upon as your very self—men who are learned, self-controlled, and highborn, and able to read a man's thoughts in his face.

[11–16] "For counsel is the basis of a king's success, Rāghava, so long as it is well kept by counselors and ministers skilled in the *śāstras*. I trust that you are not ruled by sleep, but are always awake early, while spending the late-night hours reflecting on what makes for prudent statecraft. I trust that you take counsel neither all by yourself nor with a multitude. And I trust that, once determined, your counsel does not fly about the kingdom. I trust that the enterprises you decide on involve little expense and bring great profit, and that you undertake them quickly, without procrastination. And I trust that other kings learn of your every venture only when it is fully accomplished, or nearly so, and never beforehand. I trust further, dear boy, that your counsels, dear brother, or your ministers', even when not betrayed, cannot be discovered through reasoning or supposition.

[17–21] "You prefer, I trust, a single wise man to a thousand fools. At times of political crisis a wise man can confer great benefits. A king may turn to thousands of fools, to tens of thousands, but they will not render him the least assistance. Yet even a single minister who is clever, brave, capable, and knowledgeable can secure great royal fortune for a king or his officer. I trust that you have appointed servants to the tasks appropriate to them, the foremost servants to the most important tasks, the middling to the middling ones, and the lowly to the low. I trust that you appoint your principal

ministers to the principal tasks, men who hold hereditary positions, who are honest and have passed the test of loyalty.

[22–27] "I trust that the people have no reason to despise you, as sacrificial priests despise an outcaste, or women a lover who takes them brutally. [jjj]Remember, too, that a shrewd man with cunning schemes, a servant prone to corruption, or a man who is bold and hungry for power will slay you if you do not strike first. I further trust that you have appointed as your general a bold and brave man, one who is steady, sagacious, honest, highborn, loyal, and capable. And I trust that you show honor and esteem to your foremost soldiers, the courageous, powerful men who are skilled in battle and have already demonstrated their heroism. And I trust that you pay, when payment is due, the appropriate wages and rations to your army, and do not defer them. For if the time for their wages and rations is missed, servants grow angry with their masters and are easily corrupted—and this, as it is set down in the texts, can lead to very great misfortune.

[28–33] "I trust that everyone has remained loyal to you, especially the men of good family, and that they would willingly give up their lives in your cause. I trust that you always choose a man of the provinces as your envoy, Bharata, a wise, diplomatic, perceptive, and discerning man who repeats exactly what he is told. And I trust that you have come to learn the minds of the eighteen chief officials in each foreign state, and the fifteen of your own, by means of undetectable spies, three for every official. I also trust, crusher of your foes, that you do not wrongly view as harmless any hostile men who, once deported, have made their way back. You do not, I trust, associate with brahmans who are materialists, dear brother. Their only skill is in bringing misfortune; they are fools who think themselves wise. Although preeminent texts on righteous conduct are ready to hand, those ignorant fellows derive their ideas from logic alone and so propound utter nonsense.

[34–36] "I trust that you are keeping Ayodhyā content and prosperous, dear brother, the city where from ancient times our heroic ancestors have lived. I trust that the city with its sturdy gates is still true to its name, Ayodhyā, 'Unassailable,' and that it is still thronging with elephants, horses, and chariots, still crowded with nobles by the thousands—brahmans, kshatriyas, and *vaiśyas*—every one of them remaining, as always, prompt in his own tasks, self-controlled, and energetic. And I trust that the city is still

crowded with mansions of various construction and thronged with learned people.

[37–45] "I trust that the countryside is still prospering, Rāghava, and that life there continues to be comfortable, with shrines abounding by the hundreds, with sanctuaries, wells, and pools lending their adornment. I trust that the people are well settled, and the men and women happy; that fairs and festivals lend their adornment, and that the boundary lines are well spaced. I trust that the land is still rich in cattle and free from disasters, still nourished beyond the whim of the rain god, still lovely and safe from wild beasts. I trust that you cherish all men who make their living by farming and cattle raising; for a well-founded economy, dear brother, promotes the world's happiness. I trust further that you support them with protective and defensive measures. A king must, in accordance with the ways of righteousness, guard all who live in his realm. I trust that you gladden your women and guard them well, but do not place too much trust in them. [kkk]I trust that you are protecting the elephant forests, and attending to the needs of the elephants. I trust you always arise early, prince, and display yourself in full array to the people on the thoroughfares. I trust too that all the forts are well stocked with money, grain, weapons, and water, with engines of war, and with craftsmen and archers. I trust that your revenues far exceed your expenditures, I hope, and your treasure never passes into unworthy hands, Rāghava.

[46–50] "I trust that your expenditures are assigned to the gods and ancestors, brahmans and guests, the soldiers and hosts of allies. I trust that no noble, honest man is ever charged with theft, without being first interrogated by men learned in the *śāstras*; and if innocent, is never imprisoned out of greed. And when a thief, either caught in the act or discovered with the stolen property, has been seized and interrogated, I hope he is never set free, bull among men, out of greed for money. And I trust that your wise ministers, Rāghava, render judgment impartially when a rich man and a poor man are engaged in a suit. For the tears people shed when falsely accused come to slay the livestock and children of the king who rules for personal gain.

[51–55] "I trust, moreover, that you make use of the three means, Rāghava—affection, kind words, and gifts—in showing regard for children, the aged, and the foremost learned brahmans. I trust too that you pay

homage to your *gurus*, to the aged, to ascetics, guests, and gods, to shrines and all accomplished brahmans. Then too, I trust that you never deny the claims of righteousness in the name of statecraft, or again, the claims of statecraft in the name of righteousness, or either of them—from lust for pleasure—in the name of personal desire. I also trust, foremost of champions, that you make due allocation of time to matters of righteousness, the state, and personal desire and that you are cognizant of the proper times for each, Bharata, and attend to them all. I trust that the brahmans who comprehend the meaning of all the *śāstras*, and the people of the city and provinces too, wish you happiness, my wise brother.

[56–59] "I trust that you avoid the fourteen errors of kings: atheism; falsehood; irascibility; inattention; procrastination; shunning the wise; indolence; sensual indulgence; solitary determination of political affairs; taking counsel with those ignorant of such affairs; failure to execute your decisions, to keep your counsel secret, or to employ auspicious rites; and indiscriminate courtesy. And finally, I trust that you never eat savory foods all by yourself, Rāghava, and that you give aid to allies when they request it."

Sarga 95

[1–7] When Bharata had listened to Rāma's words, he replied: "What good is it for me to know the right conduct of kings, when I am wholly lost to righteousness? There is an ancient practice of righteousness, bull among men, one established among us for all time. It is this: with the eldest brother living, your majesty, a younger may not become king. So you must come back with me, Rāghava, to the prosperous city of Ayodhyā, and have yourself consecrated for the good of our House. Some say a king is but a mortal; but I esteem him a god. His conduct in matters of righteousness and statecraft, it is rightly said, is beyond that of mere mortals. While I was still in the land of the Kekayas, my brother, and you had withdrawn to the wilderness, the king, a man esteemed by the good, a performer of sacrifices, went to heaven. So arise, tiger among men, make the funeral libation to Father. Śatrughna here and I have already done so. For it is said, Rāghava, that what a well-loved person gives to those in the world of the ancestors abides forever—and Father loved you so well."

[8–11] When he heard Bharata's piteous words that told him of his father's death—the dreadful words Bharata spoke, which struck him like a bolt of lightning—Rāma Rāghava, slayer of enemies, lost consciousness. Throwing out his arms he fell to the ground like a flowering tree in the forest cut down by an axe. Fallen upon the earth, Rāma, the lord of the earth, resembled a bull elephant asleep, grown weary from striking a riverbank. His three brothers and Vaidehī wept as they sprinkled water upon him, the great bowman, utterly broken by grief.

[12–17] Regaining consciousness, Kākutstha, with tears pouring from his eyes, began a long and mournful lament, crying: "What good was I, a wretched son, to my great father? He died of grief for me, and I could not even perform his final rites. Oh Bharata, my blameless brother, you have achieved your greatest goal, you and Śatrughna, since you were able to honor the king with all the rites for the dead. Ayodhyā is bereft of the lord of men; it no longer has its chief, no longer has direction. Even were my stay in the forest over, I could not bear to go back. When my stay in the forest is at an end, slayer of enemies, who will there be in Ayodhyā ever again to give me guidance, now that Father has gone to the next world? In the past, when Father observed good conduct on my part, he would say such gratifying things to me, so pleasant to hear. From whom am I to hear them now?"

[18–2178*–2179*–22] When he had finished speaking to Bharata, Rāghava approached his wife, her face like the full moon, and, consumed with grief, he said to her: "Sītā, your father-in-law is dead, and you, Lakṣmaṇa, have lost your father. Bharata has brought the sorrowful news that the lord of the earth has gone to heaven." [lll]As Kākutstha spoke, still more copious tears welled up in the eyes of the glorious young men. His three brothers did what they could to solace him, and they told him, "Let the funeral libation be offered to Father, the master of the world." [mmm]When Sītā heard that her father-in-law, the king, had gone to heaven, tears so flooded her eyes that she no longer could see her husband. As the daughter of Janaka wept, Rāma comforted her. Lost in sorrow, he then sorrowfully said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Bring me a cake of *iñgudī* meal and fetch an upper garment of barkcloth. I will go to make the funeral libation for our great father. Let Sītā proceed in front, and you next, while I go at the rear, for such is the procession of mourning."

[23–28] Then their constant attendant, the celebrated Sumantra, a high-minded and gentle man, self-restrained, tranquil, and staunchly devoted to Rāma, joined the princes in consoling Rāghava. Supporting him, he helped him down to the auspicious Mandākinī River. With difficulty the glorious princes made their way to the charming bathing place on the lovely Mandākinī River, where the woodlands were always in flower, and the current ran swiftly. And upon reaching the bathing spot, auspicious and sparkling clear, they sprinkled water for the king, intoning, "So let this be for you." The protector of the earth then held out a handful of water, and, facing to the south, the direction of Yama, he said, weeping, "O tiger among kings, may this pure water I now offer you remain with you in the world of the ancestors."

[29–33] Mighty Rāghava then ascended from the bathing place on the Mandākinī and in the company of his brothers made the offering of food to his father. Upon a spread of *darbha* grass Rāma deposited the cake of *iṅgudī* meal mixed with fruit of the *badarī* tree. And weeping in the anguish of his deep sorrow, he said, "Be pleased to partake of this, great king, such food as we ourselves now eat, for a man's gods must feed on the same food as he." The tiger among men ascended from the riverbank and, by the same way he had come, ascended the lovely slope of the mountain. And upon reaching the door of his leaf hut, the lord of the world clasped both Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa in his arms.

[34–38] All the brothers began to weep along with Vaidehī, and the mountain echoed with the sound, as of lions roaring. Bharata's soldiers were alarmed when they heard the tumultuous sound. "Bharata must surely have met with Rāma," they said. "The loud sound must be their grieving over their dead father." With one mind they all left their camps and raced off in the direction of the noise, following where it led them. Some went on horses or elephants, others—the more delicate ones—on ornate chariots, while the rest of the men went on foot. All the people rushed to the ashram, yearning to see Rāma, for, though his absence had been brief, it had seemed so very long.

[39–43] Yearning to see the reunion of the brothers, they hurried off on every sort of vehicle, in a flurry of hooves and wheels. Struck by the hooves and wheels of the many vehicles, the earth gave off a tumultuous sound, like the heavens when storm clouds gather. The sound frightened the bull

elephants and the cows in their train, and they ran off to another part of the forest, perfuming the way with their scent. Boars, deer, lions, buffaloes, apes, monkeys, tigers, nilgai, and gayal were also terrified, as were the chitals, while the birds—*cakravākas*, *natyūhas*, *haṃsas*, *kāraṇḍavas*, *plavas*, *kokilas*, and cock *krauñcas*—fled to the horizons in a blind rush.

[44–47] The sky appeared to be as covered with birds terrified by the sound as did the earth with men. Righteous Rāma then caught sight of his tearful, sorrowing men, and like a father or a mother, he embraced them. The prince embraced some men, while others did obeisance to him; his presence restored to all of them, each according to his station, their one true kinsman or one true friend. [nnn]And as the great men wept, the sound of it made earth and heaven echo continually, through the mountain caves and all directions, with a clamor like the roll of *mṛdañga* drums.

Sarga 96

[1–5] Placing the wives of Daśaratha before him, Vasiṣṭha set out for that spot, longing to see Rāma. Proceeding slowly toward the Mandākinī, the wives of the king soon spied the bathing place that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa frequented. Kausalyā's throat was choked with tears, and her mouth went dry as she spoke in her desolation to Sumitrā and the other wives of the king. She said: "This must be where they come to bathe—poor children. It has recently been disturbed by them, who are ever undisturbed in their actions. Once it was deserted, away here in the forest—but now they have been driven here from their own country! It must be from here, Sumitrā, that your son Saumitri, constantly and without flagging, has to fetch water himself on my son's behalf."

[6–12] Then the large-eyed woman spied there, on the ground, the cake of *iñgudī* meal for their father set down upon some *darbha* grass, whose tips pointed toward the south. And when Queen Kausalyā observed what had been deposited on the ground by Rāma in anguish for his father, she said to all of Daśaratha's women: "Look at this. It was offered by Rāghava according to precept to his father, the great Rāghava, the leader of the Ikṣvākus. But how unseemly a food I find it for the great and godlike king, who used to enjoy so many delicacies. He had the whole four-cornered earth for his enjoyment and was great Indra's equal on earth. How is it possible that the lord of the earth must now eat a cake of *iñgudī* meal? No

greater sorrow than this has the world to show me, that Rāma, once so wealthy, should now have only *iñgudī* meal to offer his father. And now I have right before my very eyes the cake of *iñgudī* meal Rāma offered his father—how is it, then, that my heart does not burst for grief into a thousand pieces?"

[13–16] As she was in such anguish, her co-wives tried to comfort her. They continued on, then, and soon caught sight of Rāma in the ashram, resembling an immortal god fallen from heaven. And as his mothers gazed at Rāma, who was now denied every luxury, they too were anguished and racked with grief and they broke out in shrill weeping. Rāma, tiger among men, a man always true to his promise, then rose and clasped the lovely feet of all his mothers. And the large-eyed women brushed the dust from his back with their lovely hands, with their soft fingers and palms so pleasant to the touch.

[17–23] Saumitri too was overcome with sorrow as he gazed at all his mothers. He did obeisance to them after Rāma, slowly and clingingly. All of the women treated good Lakṣmaṇa, a son born of Daśaratha, exactly as they treated Rāma. Sītā as well sorrowfully grasped the feet of her mothers-in-law and stood before them, her eyes brimming with tears. Just as a mother would embrace her own daughter, Kausalyā embraced Sītā as she stood anguished with sorrow, desolate and haggard from her stay in the forest. And she said to her: "How is it possible that the daughter of the king of Videha, the daughter-in-law of Daśaratha, the wife of Rāma, should have to live a life of hardship in the desolate forest? Your face is like a lotus scorched by sun, like a withered lily, gold caked with dirt, or the moon obscured by clouds; and as I look at it, grief consumes me as fire consumes its fuel—a wild grief, here, in my heart, Vaidehī, kindled by this calamity."

[24–29] Even as his anguished mother was speaking in this fashion, Bharata's elder brother made his way to Vasiṣṭha and clasped his feet. Rāghava grasped the feet of the fiery and brilliant *purohita* just as Indra, overlord of the immortal gods, might grasp Bṛhaspati's, and then, together, they took their seats. Last, righteous Bharata sat down near his elder brother, and with him sat the counselors, the leading men of the city, the soldiers, and the people most wise in the ways of righteousness. As mighty Bharata sat next to him and gazed at him who was still radiant with majesty despite his ascetic's garb, he humbly cupped his hands in reverence, like

great Indra before Prajāpati, lord of creatures. And the nobles waited and with great curiosity wondered, "Just what will Bharata say to Rāghava now, after bowing to him and showing him honor?" Surrounded by their friends the brothers sat—truthful Rāghava, high-minded Lakṣmaṇa, and righteous Bharata—like the three sacred fires at a sacrificial session surrounded by the ritual officiants.

Sarga 97

[1–7] Now, when Rāma had first comforted his brother Bharata, who so cherished his *guru*, he and his brother Lakṣmaṇa began to question him: "I should like to hear from your own lips what all this means, why you have come to this region in barkcloth, hides, and matted hair. For what reason did you leave the kingdom and enter this region wearing black hides and matted hair? Please, tell me everything." Questioned in this fashion by great Kākutstha, the son of Kaikeyī cupped his hands in reverence once more, and holding them out firmly, he replied: "It was grave wrongdoing for our great-armed father to repudiate my noble brother. And grief for his son so tortured him that he went to heaven. Under the constraint of a woman—my mother, Kaikeyī—he committed this great evil, slayer of your foes, which robbed him of his glory. But my mother never achieved her goal, the kingship. And now she is a widow racked with grief, who must fall into the most abominable hell.

[8–13] "Please show your grace to me, your slave. Have yourself consecrated, like Indra the munificent, into the kingship this very day. All these subjects and your widowed mothers have come themselves to you. Please, show them your grace. It is proper both by reason of the succession and by the virtue of you yourself, O giver of honor. So you must assume the kingship as is right, and grant your loved ones their desire. Let the earth be a widow no more, but once again complete, with you as her husband, just as the autumnal night is made complete by the bright, hare-marked moon. I and all the advisers here are begging you with heads bowed low. Tiger among men, please show your grace to me, your brother, your pupil, and your slave, and please do not transgress against this whole order of advisers, this ancient, hereditary, and venerable order."

[14–18] Having spoken in this fashion, Bharata, the great-armed son of Kaikeyī, tearfully pressed his head once more to Rāma's feet. And as his

brother Bharata stood heaving sighs like an elephant in rut, Rāma embraced him and replied: "You are highborn, valorous, and mighty, and keep your vows. How would it be possible for one such as you ever to do evil for the sake of kingship? I find not even the slightest fault with you, crusher of your foes. But then too, you ought not reproach your mother so childishly. O foremost of those who uphold righteousness, your mother commands as much reverence as our father, who was wise in the ways of righteousness and honored by all the world.

[19–24] "Our father and mother, righteous people both, bade me, 'You must go to the forest.' How should I have done otherwise, Rāghava? It is now for you to assume the kingship in Ayodhyā, which is honored by all the world. And I must live in the Daṇḍaka forest, wearing clothes of barkcloth. Such was the apportionment the great king made in the presence of the people. Then, after having given his orders, the mighty Daśaratha went to heaven. The righteous king, the *guru* of the world, must be your guide. You must accept what Father bestowed, whatever your portion. And as for me, dear boy, I will accept the portion bestowed by our great father and withdraw for fourteen years to the Daṇḍaka forest. This is what our great father—who was held in honor by all the men of the world, the peer of Indra, overlord of the wise gods—bade me do. It is this that I regard as my ultimate good, and not perpetual lordship over all the worlds."

Sarga 98

[1–5] As the lions among men continued to grieve in the company of their hosts of friends, the night passed sorrowfully. And when night had brightened into dawn, Rāma's brothers performed the morning offering and prayers by the Mandākinī in the company of their friends, and then returned to him. They sat together in silence, no one saying a word, until, from where he sat among their friends, Bharata addressed Rāma: "My mother has been satisfied; the kingship has been bestowed on me. And I bestow it on you, and you alone. Enjoy unchallenged kingship. Like a dike washed away by a great flood when the rains come, the kingdom will face disintegration and you alone can prevent it.

[6–12] "Just as a donkey cannot match the pace of a horse and common birds cannot match that of the great eagle Tārkṣya, so I lack power to match yours, lord of the earth. Life is ever easy when it is others who must depend

on you, but how hard life is, Rāma, when you must depend on others. It is like when a man plants a sapling and nurtures it until it becomes a great tree with spreading branches, impossible for a short man to climb. When the tree comes into flower but shows no fruit—the whole purpose for which it was grown—the man fails to take any pleasure in it. This is just a simile, my great-armed brother—and you will easily grasp its meaning—for your not ruling over us, a bull-like master over his servants. Let the guildsmen, O great king, and all the leading subjects behold you installed in the kingship, tamer of your foes, blazing like the sun. Let rutting elephants trumpet in your entourage, Kākutstha; let the women of the inner apartments rejoice with all their hearts."

[13–20] When the various groups of townsfolk heard Bharata's speech as he was pleading with Rāma, they thought, "He is right!" Accomplished Rāma then gazed at glorious Bharata, who was lamenting in his sorrow, and, in full possession of himself, tried to comfort him with these words: "No one acts of his own free will; man is not independent. This way and that he is dragged along by fate. All accumulations end in loss, all elevations end in falls, all unions end in separation, and all life ends in death. Just as a ripe fruit need fear one thing—to fall—so every man that is born need fear but death. Just as a stout-pillared house decays and collapses, so men collapse, succumbing to old age and death. The passing days and nights quickly deplete the life of all living things in the world, just as the fierce-rayed sun dries up water in the summer. You should be grieving for yourself alone, not for anyone else. Your life is steadily dwindling, whether you stand still or move.

[21–26] "Mṛtyu, the god of death, walks with you; Mṛtyu sits beside you. Travel as far away as you like, Mṛtyu will return with you. Wrinkles beset the body, the hair turns white; a man decays with old age, and what can he do to escape it? People are glad when the sun rises, and glad when it sets; but they do not mark that their life is slipping away. All things that breathe are delighted to see the face of each new season come, though with the turning of the seasons their life breath is slipping away. Just as two pieces of wood might drift together in the open sea and, having met, drift apart after a few brief moments, so too do your wives and children, your relatives and riches meet with you and hasten away. To lose them is a certainty.

[27–30] “No creature that draws breath in the world can escape this course of things. There is no cure to be found for it, grieve for the dead all you will. Like a man standing by the roadside and calling out to a passing caravan, ‘I too am coming, right behind you’—so did our ancestors take this sure road, our fathers and our forefathers. Why should you grieve when you cannot avoid it, when you are following that very road yourself? Since life trickles away like the waters of a stream, never to return, happiness should be one’s aim—and people have found happiness, or so it is recorded.

[31–36] “By means of every holy rite, with fitting priestly stipends, our righteous father, the lord of the earth, cleansed away his sins and went to heaven. Our father conscientiously supported his dependents, protected his subjects, levied taxes in accordance with righteousness, and by virtue of these acts he has gone to the highest heaven. Having offered up the various sacrifices and enjoyed abundant pleasures, the lord of the earth attained a ripe old age and went to heaven. Our father abandoned a decrepit mortal body and found the heavenly treasure that awaits one in the Brahmaloka. This man no one should mourn, no one as wise as you, as learned and intelligent. The strong of heart will shun these different griefs, these words of lamentation, this weeping, and hold fast to wisdom in all circumstances.

[37–40] “So compose yourself and do not grieve, most eloquent of men. Go back and take up your residence in the city, as Father of his own accord directed you to do. And the order this same man of holy deeds has given me I shall carry out, and exactly where our noble father directed. It would be wrong, tamer of your foes, for me to disregard his order. And you too must always honor it, for he was our kinsman, indeed, our father.” Such were Rāma’s most sensible words, and when he finished speaking, righteous Bharata made this righteous and wonderful reply:

[41–45] “Where in such a world as this is your like to be found, tamer of your foes, a man whom sorrow does not pain, and joy does not delight? You are esteemed by the elders, you have questioned them about your doubts and gained these insights about the living and the dead, and how alike they are both in their existing and not existing. What is there that could distress you? Such a man does not despair when calamity befalls him. Your courage is like that of a deathless god; you are a great man true to your word. You are all-knowing and all-seeing and a man of wisdom, Rāghava. In

possession of such virtues and sage in matters of birth and death, you should not be affected by sorrow, however insufferable.

[46–50] “While I was away, my mother, that wretched woman, did a terrible thing on my behalf, which I never sought. Please forgive me! I am bound by the bond of righteousness, and therefore, I do not execute my mother here and now through the harshest form of punishment, although that evil doer is deserving of punishment. For how could I, a son born of Daśaratha—that man of honorable family and honorable deeds—knowing the meaning of righteousness, do a deed so abominable, so unrighteous? I would not reproach our late father before the assembly; for he was a god to us, a performer of sacred rites, our *guru*, elder, king, and father. Nonetheless, my righteous brother, what man knowing the meaning of righteousness would do so sinful a deed, contrary to all that is right and good, just to please a woman?

[51–55] “There is an ancient saying: ‘Creatures lose their wits when their end is near.’ In acting as he did, the king has illustrated this saying for all the world. Mindful of what is correct, you must redress the transgression Father committed out of anger, delusion, and recklessness. For the world considers a child to be truly a son only if he corrects his father’s transgressions; otherwise it is the other way around. Be such a child and do not endorse the evil deed Father did, censured by every man of wisdom in the world. You must save Kaikeyī, Father, and me, save your friends and our kinsmen, all the people of the city and provinces, this whole world.

[56–60] “How incongruous they are, this wilderness and the kshatriya class, this matted hair and the government of men. You must not do so perverse a deed. Or, if it is your wish to follow the way of righteousness that demands physical exhaustion, then endure the exhaustion of righteously governing the four social classes. O you who understand righteousness, those who understand righteousness have proclaimed that the state of a householder is the foremost of the four stages of life. How can you renounce it? I am a mere child compared to you, both in learning and order of birth. How could I govern the earth when you are present? I am but a child, deficient in virtue, intelligence, and status. Without you I could not manage.

[61–68] “Knower of righteousness, in keeping with your own proper duty, you must, together with your kinsmen, govern the kingdom of our

fathers, this entire, sovereign, unchallenged kingdom. Let all the subjects in a body, and the sacrificial priests under Vasiṣṭha's lead who are skilled in vedic *mantras*, consecrate you here and now to the accompaniment of the vedic *mantras*. Once we have consecrated you, you must return and protect Ayodhyā, utterly triumphant over all peoples, just like Indra Vāsava together with the Maruts. You must discharge the three debts: those owed to the seers, the ancestors, and the gods. And you must eradicate your enemies, fulfill your friends' every desire, and give me proper guidance. Elder brother, this very day let your friends find delight in your consecration; this very day let your enemies take fright and flee in the ten directions. Bull among men, please free my mother and me from this infamy this very day and guard our revered father from sin. I implore you with my head bowed low. Take pity on me, on all your kinsmen, just as Śiva Maheśvara takes pity on all creatures. However, if you only turn your back and go off into the forest, I will go with you as well."

[69–71] But even though Bharata wearied himself begging Rāma's grace with his head bowed low, the courageous lord of the earth was resolved not to return, but to hold firmly to his father's word. Witnessing Rāghava's wonderful determination, the people, though sorrowful, experienced joy at the same time. They were sorrowful because he would not return to Ayodhyā and yet they rejoiced to observe his firmness in adhering to his vow. The sacrificial priests, the merchants, and the commanders of the troops, and also his mothers, stunned though they were and choked with tears, commended Bharata for saying those words. Then, all together, they bowed low before Rāma and began to implore him.

Sarga 99

[1–6] As Bharata was speaking in this fashion, Lakṣmaṇa's majestic eldest brother, the most honored among his kinsmen, replied to him once more: "How fitting are the words you have spoken, like a true son of Kaikeyī and Daśaratha, the best of kings. However, long ago, dear brother, when our father was about to marry your mother, he made a bride-price pledge to your grandfather—the ultimate price, the kingship. Later, during a battle between the gods and *asuras*, the lordly king of the land, pleased and delighted with your mother, granted her a boon. Your illustrious fair-complexioned mother then bound the best of men to his oath and demanded

these two boons of him: the kingship for you, tiger among men, and my banishment. And under this constraint the king granted her the boon.

[7–13] “And that is why, bull among men, Father constrained me to do this, to live in the forest for fourteen years, in accordance with the granting of his boon. And I for my part have come here, to the desolate forest, with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, and I will brook no opposition to my safeguarding Father’s truthfulness. In just the same way you must likewise ensure, by your immediate consecration, that the truth of the lord of kings, our father, be preserved. For my sake, Bharata, knower of righteousness, you must free the lordly king from his debt. You must save your father and give your mother cause to rejoice. For, dear boy, I have heard recited a verse sung long ago by illustrious Gaya when he was offering a sacrifice to his ancestors in the land of Gayā: ‘Because a son rescues (*trāyate*) his father from the hell named Put, he is called *putra*; or because he protects his ancestors. Thus, one should strive to have many virtuous and learned sons, for among such a host perhaps one might be found who will make the journey to Gayā.’

[14–19] “All the royal seers have concurred in this, delight of the king. Thus, lordly best of men, you must save our father from hell. Heroic Bharata, you must return to Ayodhyā with Śatrughna and all the twice-born men and win the loyalty of your subjects. As for me, I will enter the Daṇḍaka forest without delay, your majesty, and only these two shall join me, Vaidehī and Lakṣmaṇa. It is you, Bharata, who must become the king of men. As for me, I shall become sovereign king of the beasts of the wild. Go now in delight, to the best of cities, and in delight I too shall go off to the Daṇḍakas. Let the royal parasol cast its cool shade over your head, blocking out the rays of the sun, maker of day. I shall have shade as well to retreat to for comfort, the deeper shade of these woodland trees. Quick-witted Śatrughna will be your companion while trustworthy Saumitri will be my chief ally. Let all four of us, his principal sons, preserve the truth of the lord of men. Do not despair.”

Sarga 100

[1–6] Now, while he was consoling Bharata, an eminent brahman named Jābāli addressed righteous Rāma in words at variance with righteousness: “This is all very well, Rāghava, but you really must not entertain such

useless ideas like the commonest of men, and you a noble-minded man in distress. What man is truly kin to anyone, what profit has anyone in anyone else? Just as a person is born alone, so must he die. And so, Rāma, the man who feels attachment, thinking, 'This is my mother, this my father,' should be regarded as a madman, for in truth no one belongs to anyone. A man traveling from village to village will spend the night somewhere and the next day leave the place where he stopped and continue on—in the same way, Kākutstha, his father and mother, his home and wealth are mere stopping places for a man. The wise feel no attachment to them.

[7–11] "Best of men, you must not abdicate the kingship of your fathers and embark upon this terrible path, which is painful, rocky, and full of thorns. You should consecrate yourself in prosperous Ayodhyā; the city is waiting for you, wearing the single braid of a waiting wife. You should indulge in priceless royal pleasures and enjoy yourself in Ayodhyā, prince, like Śakra in his heaven Triviṣṭapa. Daśaratha was nobody to you, and you were nobody to him. The king was one person, you another. So do as I am telling you. The king has gone where he had to go; such is the course all mortals follow. You are merely deluding yourself.

[12–17] "The men I grieve for, and I grieve for no one else, are those who place 'righteousness' above what brings them profit. They find only sorrow in this world, and at death their lot is annihilation just the same. People here busy themselves because 'It is the Eighth Day, the rite for the ancestors.' But just look at the waste of food—what really is a dead man going to eat? And if something one person eats here could fill the belly of someone else, one could simply offer *śrāddha* for a traveler, and he would need no provisions for the road. The texts that preach, 'Sacrifice, give alms, sanctify yourself, practice asceticism, renounce,' are all composed by clever men as lures to solicit donations for themselves. You must accept the idea once and for all, high-minded prince, that there exists no world to come. Address yourself to what can be perceived and turn your back on what cannot. You should give precedence to these ideas of the wise, with which the whole world concurs. Propitiated by Bharata, you must accept the kingship."

Sarga 101

[1–6] Upon hearing Jābāli’s words, Rāma, foremost among the truthful, replied with sound logic, his own convictions quite unshaken. He said: “What you, sir, have said in the hopes of pleasing me is wrong with only a semblance of right; it is harm that simulates help. A person wins no esteem among the wise when his conduct belies his tenets, and he acts in evil ways, recognizing no bounds. It is conduct alone that proclaims whether a man is highborn or base, honest or dishonest, brave or merely a braggart. It would be ignobility with a semblance of nobility, dishonesty with an outward show of honesty, dishonor masquerading as honor, indecency disguised as decency, were I to reject the good and accept such unrighteousness. For it merely wears the cloak of righteousness. It would throw the world into confusion, and is utterly in conflict with both duty and precept.

[7–11] “For what sensible man anywhere in the world, aware of what is right and wrong, would hold me in high esteem were I a man of evil acts, a corruptor of the people? To whose actions should I be conforming, and how then should I reach heaven, were I to adopt such a practice and break my promise? Moreover, all the people would follow suit in acting as they please, for subjects will behave just like their king. The actions of a king must always be truthful and benevolent. The kingdom will thereby be true, the world firmly established on truth. For it is truth and truth alone that both gods and seers hold in esteem, for the man who tells the truth in this world will attain the highest abode.

[12–16] “People recoil from a man who speaks falsely, just as they do from a snake. Truth, it is said, is the ultimate form of righteousness in this world, and the very root of heaven. Truth is the lord of this world, the goddess of the lotus resides in truth, all things are rooted in truth, there is no higher goal than truth. The almsgiving, sacrifices, the offering of oblations, the practice of asceticism, and the *vedas* themselves are all based on truth, and so it is truth that must be one’s highest aim. One man protects the world, one protects his House, one is exalted in heaven, and one sinks down to hell. As for me, why should I not truthfully follow my father’s command? I have always been true to my word, and I have pledged upon my truth.

[17–21] “Not out of greed or delusion or ignorance would I blindly breach the dam of truth. No, I will remain true to my promise to my *guru*. Neither the gods nor the ancestors, we have heard, accept offerings from a

man whose covenant is false, nor from an inconstant and irresolute man. I know myself that this personal code of righteousness is the true one. Wise men have always borne the burden it imposes, and I gladly accept it. I reject the kshatriya’s code, where unrighteousness and righteousness go hand in hand, a code that only debased, vicious, covetous, and evil men observe. And sinful action is of three sorts: one can have evil thoughts, or do an evil deed, or tell a lie.

[22–25] “Land, fame, glory, and wealth seek out the man who holds to truth and ever attend on him. [ooo]One then should devote himself to truth alone. What you consider to be the best course is in fact ignoble; the statements you make urging me to ‘do what is good for me’ are mere sophistry. I have promised my *guru* to live in the forest. How then can I do as Bharata bids and defy the bidding of my *guru*? I made this promise in the presence of my *guru*, my father, and it brought delight to the heart of Queen Kaikeyī. That promise shall never be broken.

[26–31] “I will therefore live a life of purity in the forest, restricting my food to holy things, roots, fruits, and flowers, and gratifying the gods and ancestors. My five senses will have contentment enough, and I shall be maintaining the world on its course. Moreover, I myself shall remain a sincere believer, fully aware of what is right and what is wrong. On entering this realm of action one must do good deeds. And such deeds have their rewards. Agni, god of fire, Vāyu, god of wind, and the Soma, the moon god, have reaped them. After Indra brought a hundred rites to completion, he became the king of the gods in the highest heaven. After performing awesome feats of asceticism, the great seers too reached heaven. Wise men say that truthfulness, righteousness, and strenuous effort, compassion for creatures and kindly words, reverence for twice-born brahmans, gods, and guests is the path to the highest heaven. Those men who are earnest in righteousness and keep company with the wise, who are supremely generous, nonviolent, and free from taint, those supreme and mighty sages are the ones truly worthy of reverence in this world.”

Sarga 102

[1–5] Vasiṣṭha, perceiving that Rāma was angry, addressed him: “Jābāli likewise understands the true course of birth and death in this world. He only said these things in his desire to dissuade you. I want you now, master

of the world, to learn from me the origin of this world. Everything was once just water, and within this water the earth was fashioned. The self-existent Brahmā then came into existence with the gods. He then became a boar, raised up the treasure-laden earth, and created the whole moving world with the help of his accomplished sons. Brahmā the everlasting, the eternal and imperishable, arose from the ether and from him Marīci was born, and from Marīci, a son, Kaśyapa. Vivasvant, the sun, was born from Kaśyapa. Manu is known as Vaivasvata, the son of Vivasvant—he was the first Prajāpati, lord of creatures—and the son of Manu was Ikṣvāku.

[6–10] "It was upon him that Manu originally bestowed this prosperous land, and thus you must know that Ikṣvāku was the first king of Ayodhyā. The son of Ikṣvāku, so we have heard, was majestic Kukṣi, and Kukṣi was the father of the heroic Vikukṣi. The son of Vikukṣi was the mighty, powerful Bāṇa, and Bāṇa's son was the great-armed, glorious Anaraṇya. When Anaraṇya, the best of men, was king, there was no drought, no famine, and not even a single thief in the land. Anaraṇya had a great-armed son, King Pṛthu. And Pṛthu was the father of the great king Triśañku, that heroic man who by virtue of his truthfulness went to heaven with his earthly body.

[11–15] "Triśañku had a glorious son, Dhundhumāra, and Dhundhumāra begot the illustrious Yuvanāśva. Yuvanāśva was the father of majestic Māndhātṛ, and Māndhātṛ was the father of mighty Susandhi. Susandhi had two sons, Dhruvasandhi and Prasenajit. Dhruvasandhi had a son named Bharata, an illustrious crusher of his foes. To great-armed Bharata was born a son named Asita, against whom his neighboring kings, the Haihayas, the Tālajañghas, the Śūras, and the Śaśabindus, rose up in enmity. The king marshaled his troops in battle against them all, but still he was driven into exile and became a contented sage upon a lovely mountain. He had two wives, both of whom were pregnant, so we have heard.

[16–20] "A man of the Bhārgava lineage, Cyavana had retired to the Himalayas, and Kālindī once approached the seer and did respectfully greet him, for she was eager to obtain a boon for the birth of a son; and the sage respectfully greeted her in turn. The queen then went home and soon gave birth to a son. Her co-wife had given her poison in order to slay the unborn child, but he was born nonetheless along with that very poison, and so they called him Sagara, 'With Poison.' This was the King Sagara who, while

performing a sacrifice, caused the excavation of the ocean, which even now frightens creatures when it swells under the full moon. Asamañja, or so we have heard, was the son of Sagara, but in the very prime of life he was expelled by his father for the evil deeds he had done.

[21–25] "Heroic Aṃśumant was the son of Asamañja, Dilīpa was the son of Aṃśumant, and Bhagīratha of Dilīpa. Bhagīratha was the father of Kakutstha, from whom you have come to be known as the Kākutsthas. Kakutstha's son was Raghu, whence you are called the Rāghavas. Raghu's mighty son was the immensely powerful man-eater known throughout the world as Kalmāṣapāda Saudāsa. The son of Kalmāṣapāda was called Śaṅkhaṇa, and whoever came up against his might perished utterly along with his army. The son of Śaṅkhaṇa was heroic and majestic Sudarśana, Sudarśana's son was Agnivarṇa, and Agnivarṇa's son was Śīghraga.

[26–31] "Śīghraga's son was Maru, Maru's son was Praśuśruka, Praśuśruka's son was the splendid Ambarīṣa. Ambarīṣa's son was the valorous Nahuṣa and Nahuṣa's son was the supremely righteous Nābhāga. Aja and Suvrata were the two sons of Nābhāga, and Aja's son was righteous King Daśaratha. And you, known far and wide as Rāma, are his eldest son and heir. Assume, then, the kingship that is your own and show regard for the world, your majesty. For among all the Ikṣvākus the firstborn has always become the king. When the firstborn is living, it is not a younger son but only the eldest who is consecrated for kingship. This is the immemorial custom of your own House, the House of Rāghava, and you must not abandon it now. You must govern the earth with its abundant treasures and abundant vassal kingdoms, and, like your father, win great fame."

Sarga 103

[1–5] When Vasiṣṭha, the *purohita* of the king, had finished this speech, he once more addressed Rāma in words harmonious with righteousness: "Rāghava Kākutstha, a man born into this world has three *gurus*: his teacher, his father, and his mother. The father begets the man, bull among men, but the teacher imparts wisdom to him, and for this reason he is called *guru*. I was your father's teacher, and I am yours as well, slayer of your foes. In heeding my words, you will not stray from the path of the virtuous. Here are the men of your assembly and the guildsmen gathered together; in

practicing righteousness on their behalf, my son, you will not stray from the path of the virtuous.

[6–11] “Your mother is aged and righteous, and you must not disobey her; in doing as she bids, you will not stray from the path of the virtuous. If you heed the words Bharata uttered when supplicating you, Rāghava, you will not go astray in your pursuit of truth and righteousness.” Addressed in this gentle fashion by his *guru*, Rāghava, bull among men, for his part replied to Vasiṣṭha, who sat beside him, saying this: “The constant benefits parents confer upon their child are not easily repaid—all that a mother and father do, giving him things to the limit of their resources, bathing and clothing him, always speaking kindly to him and nurturing him as well. King Daśaratha was my father, he begot me, and the promise I made to him must not be rendered false.”

[12–15] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, noble Bharata, in great distress, addressed the charioteer who was waiting in attendance and said: “Charioteer, spread out some *kuśa* grass on the ground for me at once; I will fast against my brother, until he shows me his grace. Eating nothing, seeing nothing, like a penniless twice-born brahman, I will lie before his hut until he consents to return.” He then watched in distress as Sumantra remained with his eyes fixed on Rāma, and then he procured a layer of *kuśa* grass himself and spread it on the earth.

[16–21] Mighty Rāma, the best of royal seers, then said to him: “What have I done, dear Bharata, that you should fast against me? A brahman may have the right to coerce men by lying on his side, but there is no precept permitting those whose heads are anointed to fast against anyone. So stand up, Rāghava, tiger among men, and abandon this heartless vow. You must leave at once for Ayodhyā, the foremost of cities.” But Bharata still remained seated and, gazing all around at the people of the city and provinces, he cried, “Why do you not remonstrate with my brother?” But the people of the city and provinces then said to the great prince: “We recognize that what Rāghava is telling Kākutstha is right. And moreover, this illustrious man is holding firm to what his father bade him do. That is why we are truly incapable of dissuading him.”

[22–26] Upon hearing their words, Rāma said: “Listen to the words of our friends, who see with the eye of righteousness. You have heard from both sides now. Consider it properly, Rāghava. Stand up, my great-armed

brother, touch me and sip water." Bharata then rose, took a sip of water, and said: "Hear me, men of the assembly, you counselors and guildsmen as well. I did not ask my father for the kingship; I gave my mother no instructions. But I do recognize that my noble brother Rāghava is supremely wise in the ways of righteousness. Thus, if someone must live here, if Father's bidding must be done, I myself will live out the fourteen years in the forest."

[27–32] Righteous Rāma marveled at his brother's forthright declaration, and, glancing at the people of the city and provinces, he said: "What my father in his lifetime bought or sold or pledged neither Bharata nor I can in any way annul. I cannot permit a surrogate to live in the forest, for that would be repugnant to me. What Kaikeyī asked for was proper, and what my father did was rightly done. I know that Bharata is forbearing and shows his *gurus* honor. All will be perfectly safe in his care, for he is a great prince and true to his word. When I return from the forest, I shall rejoin my righteous brother and then become supreme lord of the earth. Kaikeyī made her demand of the king, and I have done her bidding and have thus saved my father, the lord of the earth, from falsehood."

Sarga 104

[1–4] The great seers who had assembled to watch the thrilling meeting of the two brothers of incomparable blazing energy were amazed. The hosts of seers, perfected beings, and supreme seers, remaining invisible, sang the praises of the two brothers, the great Kākutsthas, crying: "How fortunate the man who has such sons as these, sons who know and follow the way of righteousness. How envious we are after hearing their conversation." Then all at once the hosts of seers, eager for the destruction of ten-necked Rāvaṇa, spoke to Bharata, tiger among kings, saying:

[5–7] "O wise and highborn prince, a man of great virtue and glory. If you have any regard for your father, you must agree to what Rāma says. It is our wish that Rāma forever keep his father free from debt. It is indeed because Daśaratha was free from his debt to Kaikeyī that he has gone to heaven." Saying no more, the *gandharvas*, great seers, and royal seers all departed, each to his own abode.

[8–13] Splendid Rāma was gladdened by these splendid words, and his face beamed with delight as he paid homage to the seers. But Bharata went

limp in every limb. He cupped his hands in reverence and, in a breaking voice, once more addressed Rāghava: “Please, show regard for the code of kings and the traditional code of our House, Kākutstha. Please grant what your mother and I beg of you. I cannot, on my own, protect this vast kingdom. Nor can I win the loyalty of the people of the city and provinces, for it has already been devoted to you. It is for you alone that our kinsmen and soldiers, our allies and friends are longing, as farmers long for rain. You must, wise brother, accept the kingship and restore its stability. For you, Kākutstha, are the only one who commands the power to govern the world.”

[14–19] Having spoken in this fashion, Bharata then threw himself at Rāma’s feet, and he continued to beseech his brother with earnest expressions of love. Rāma gathered his dark and lotus-eyed brother Bharata into his embrace, and in a voice like the call of an impassioned *haṃsa* he said: “You already possess the knowledge of proper governance, dear boy, so you too are perfectly capable of protecting the land. Take counsel with your ministers, your friends, and wise counselors, and you shall see all matters accomplished, however great they may be. The moon’s splendor might forsake it, Himalaya might lose its snow, the ocean might overstep its shore, but I will never forsake my promise to our father. Whether it was love or greed that made your mother act as she did on your behalf, dear boy, should be none of your concern. You must still treat her as your mother.”

[20–25] As Kausalyā’s son was speaking in this fashion, his brilliance like the sun’s, his face like the waxing moon, Bharata replied to him: “Please place these slippers, adorned with gold, upon your feet, my brother. They will serve to guarantee the security of all the world.” The mighty tiger among men put on the slippers. Then, removing them, he presented them to great Bharata. The mighty Bharata, who understood righteousness, accepted the beautifully ornamented slippers, and, after reverently circling Rāghava, he placed them on the head of a splendid elephant. Rāma then paid homage to his people in due order: to his *gurus* and counselors, to the subjects, and to both of his younger brothers. Then the heir of the Rāghava dynasty dismissed them, unshakable as the Himalayas in his own code of righteousness. In their sorrow, his mothers could not bid him farewell, their throats were so choked with tears, but Rāma did obeisance to them all and then entered his hut, weeping.

Sarga 105

[1–5] Bharata then took those slippers and placed them on his head. Then, in delight, he boarded the chariot with Śatrughna. All the counselors revered for their counsel—Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, and Jābāli, firm in his vows, went before them. They passed the lovely Mandākinī River, heading east and keeping great Mount Citrakūṭa on their right. In the company of his army, Bharata made his way along the mountainside, observing the thousands of lovely different minerals it held. Not far from Citrakūṭa, Bharata caught sight of the ashram where the sage Bharadvāja made his residence.

[6–10] Wise Bharata, the delight of his House, approached the ashram of Bharadvāja, and alighting from the chariot, he prostrated himself at his feet. In delight Bharadvāja spoke these words to Bharata: "Have you done what had to be done, my son? Have you met with Rāma?" Addressed in this manner by the wise Bharadvāja, Bharata, who cherished the ways of righteousness, replied: "Entreated by both his *guru* and me, Rāghava, so firm in his vows, was deeply displeased and said this to Vasiṣṭha: 'I will scrupulously keep my promise to my father, the promise of the fourteen years I made to my father.'

[11–14] "Addressed in this fashion, Rāghava eloquently spoke, and the wise Vasiṣṭha replied to him with equal eloquence, uttering these weighty words: 'Be pleased, wise prince, to give us these gold ornamented slippers. In your stead they will ensure the welfare and security of Ayodhyā.' When he was addressed in this manner by Vasiṣṭha, Rāghava stood facing eastward and bestowed on me these gold-worked slippers, in order to rule the kingdom. Great Rāma then gave me leave, and now I am returning. I am going back to Ayodhyā, taking the splendid slippers with me."

[15–19] When he had heard those wonderful words of great Bharata, the sage Bharadvāja responded with words more wonderful still: "It is not surprising, tiger among men, foremost of those possessed of good character, that nobility should come to dwell in you, like rainwater in the lowlands. Your great-armed father, Daśaratha, is not dead, not when he has such a son as you, a righteous son who cherishes the ways of righteousness." When the great seer finished speaking these words, Bharata cupped his hands in reverence, and in preparation for taking his leave, he clasped his feet. Again

and again majestic Bharata reverently circled Bharadvāja, and then, together with his counselors, he set out for Ayodhyā.

[20–24] Spread far and wide with all its carriages, wagons, horses, and elephants, the army made its way back in Bharata's train. They all crossed the heavenly, wave-wreathed Yamunā River and saw once again the gracious waters of the Ganges. After crossing the river brimming with lovely water, he, his kinsmen, and his army entered lovely Śṛṅgaverapura. Beyond Śṛṅgaverapura, Bharata once more beheld Ayodhyā, and he was consumed with sorrow as he said to his charioteer: "Look, charioteer, Ayodhyā is darkened and in ruins. Its beauty is gone, its bliss is gone, it is desolate and silent."

Sarga 106

[1–5] The chariot gave out a smooth deep sound as the glorious and lordly Bharata approached and quickly entered Ayodhyā. There were cats roaming everywhere, and owls circling; the people and elephants were in hiding, and the city lay shrouded in gloom. It lay dark as night itself with no light at all. It resembled Rohiṇī, the beloved wife of Rahu's enemy, Candra, the moon god—blazing with light through her splendor—when she is left alone and obscured by an eclipse. It looked like a mountain river, its water scant, hot, and turbid, its sky-going birds dazed by summer's heat, its fish, large and small, and crocodiles lying hidden deep below. It was like a flame that has leapt from the sacrificial fire, smokeless and golden, first sprinkled with the oblation and then extinguished.

[6–10] It was like an army routed in a great battle, its armors in ruins, its horses and elephants slaughtered, its chariots and battle standards shattered, and its heroes slain. It was like a great wave raised foaming and roaring on the open sea and then, when the wind dies down, subsiding into silence. It resembled a vedic altar abandoned by the learned sacrificers and bare of all its sacrificial implements, when the hour of the *soma* pressing has come and gone, and the chanting has ceased. [ppp]It resembled a herd of cows in a cattle pen when their bull has left them, and they no longer graze the new grass but are anguished and filled with longing. It looked like a new pearl necklace when its precious gems have come unstrung, the most perfect, smooth, radiant, glistening gems.

[11–18] It resembled a star suddenly slipping from its place when its merit is exhausted, and falling from heaven down to earth, its expansive luster dimmed. It was like a woodland vine at the end of spring, decked with flowers and swarming with drunken bees, then scorched by a racing forest fire and withered. All the merchants were in a daze, the bazaars and shops closed up tight, and the city looked like the night sky covered with clouds, its hare-marked moon and constellations obscured. It looked like a rowdy drinking hall littered with smashed goblets, the costly drinks drained, and the patrons lying in the open, dead drunk. It was like a ruined well, sunken and broken, its water used up, its pavement cracked, its buckets cracked and scattered all around. It seemed like a bowstring, once long and taut and fitted out with loops, but now fallen from the bow to the ground when cut by a champion's arrows. Like a filly, it seemed stripped of all her trappings and wildly whipped on by a battle-drunk rider, a weak filly, one that should still be running free. And it was like the radiance of the sun, bringer of light, gone behind a bank of clouds when the driving rains come, and the blue-black clouds obscure it.

[19–24] Mounted in the chariot, Bharata, Daśaratha's majestic son, then spoke these words to his charioteer, who was driving the excellent chariot onward: "Why is it that the deep, pervasive sounds of singing and musical instruments are not coming from Ayodhyā now, as they always used to? The heady fragrance of wine, the pervading fragrance of garlands, and the fragrance of aloewood incense are no longer carried on the breeze. And the rumble of fine carriages, the rich sound of horses, the trumpeting of rutting elephants, and the deafening sound of chariots are no longer to be heard in the city, now that Rāma is in exile. No people are to be seen thronging together on Ayodhyā's thoroughfares, neither the youngsters in their finery nor the adults with their stately step." Saying many such things, he entered his father's residence which, now bereft of the lord of men, resembled a cave abandoned by its lion.

Sarga 107

[1–3] Then, after settling his mothers in Ayodhyā, the grief-stricken Bharata, firm in his vows, addressed his *gurus*: "I have come to ask leave of you all for I am going to Nandigrāma. There I shall endure all this sorrow of being without Rāghava. With the king gone to heaven and my *guru*

Rāma in the forest, I shall wait until he assumes the kingship, for he is our illustrious king."

[4–10] When they heard great Bharata's splendid words, Vasiṣṭha the *purohita* and all the counselors replied: "These are seemly and praiseworthy words you have spoken out of love for your brother, Bharata, and they befit you. Keeping to the noble way, always zealous on your kinsmen's behalf, and steadfast in your brotherly love—whose approval could you fail to win?" On hearing the kind words of the counselors, all that he could hope for, he said to the charioteer, "Harness my chariot." The face of the majestic prince beamed with delight as he did obeisance to all his mothers and boarded the chariot with Śatrughna. Once Bharata and Śatrughna had boarded the chariot, they sped off in great joy, together with their counselors and the *purohita*. Before them went all their *gurus*, the twice-born brahmans led by Vasiṣṭha, heading east toward Nandigrāma.

[11–15] And altogether unbidden, the army, with its crush of elephants, horses, and chariots, also set off as Bharata left, as did all the inhabitants of the city. Righteous Bharata, who cherished his brother, sped in his chariot toward Nandigrāma, still bearing the slippers upon his head. Soon Bharata entered Nandigrāma, and, hurriedly alighting from the chariot, he addressed his *gurus*: "My brother himself gave me the kingship as a trust—it is these gold-adorned slippers that will guarantee its welfare and security—and I shall guard this trust until Rāghava's return. Oh that I might soon see the feet of Rāma Rāghava placed within these slippers as I tie them on once again with my own hands.

[16–22] "Once I am reunited with Rāghava, I shall lay my burden down, making over the kingship to my *guru* and resuming toward him the conduct due a *guru*. Only when I have restored this trust to Rāghava, these splendid slippers, this kingship, and Ayodhyā, will I be cleansed of sin. Once Kākutstha is consecrated and the people are excited and happy once again, the joy and glory I shall gain will be worth four times the kingship." Lamenting in this fashion, the desolate Bharata commenced his rule in Nandigrāma in sorrow together with his counselors. Wearing barkcloth and matted hair, the garb of a sage, Lord Bharata dwelt in Nandigrāma with his army, longing for Rāma's return, cherishing his brother, doing his brother's bidding, and intent on carrying out the promise. Having consecrated the

slippers, Bharata then remained in Nandigrāma, informing those slippers of his every command.

Sarga 108

[1–7] Some time after Bharata's departure, as Rāma lived on in the grove of asceticism, he began to observe with a growing dismay an anxiety among the ascetics. It was those ascetics who had earlier taken refuge with Rāma and were pleased with the ashram there on Citrakūṭa, whom he now observed to be so anxious. They turned their gaze toward Rāma suspiciously, their brows knit in a frown, and they whispered softly to one another and held conversation among themselves. Noticing their uneasiness, Rāma began to suspect that he himself might be at fault. Cupping his hands in reverence, he addressed the seer who was chief of their community, saying: "Blessed one, I trust you have not found my conduct changed from before? Is that why this change has come over the ascetics? Have the seers found my younger brother Lakṣmaṇa doing something unbefitting him, out of negligence? And I trust that Sītā has not failed to maintain properly the conduct becoming a woman, neglecting, in overscrupulous obedience to me, her obedience to you?"

[8–10] The seer, a man advanced both in years and in asceticism, was trembling slightly as he replied to Rāma, who was so compassionate to all creatures, asking: "How could Vaidehī ever err, my son, especially against ascetics, when she is so good-natured and always earnest for what is good? It is in fact on your account that the ascetics are in this state—because of the *rākṣasas*. That is why they are disquieted and hold conversation among themselves.

[11–15] "Not far off lives one of Rāvaṇa's younger brothers—Khara is his name. He is the one who uprooted all the ascetics dwelling in Janasthāna. He is a man-eater, audacious and impudent, vicious, haughty, and evil, and he cannot abide you, my son. From the moment you came to live in this ashram, my son, the *rākṣasas* have been molesting the ascetics. They manifest themselves in every kind of deformation, loathsome, savage, and terrifying forms, a horror to behold. Enemies of all that is noble, they defile some ascetics with unspeakable impurities and strike terror into others by suddenly appearing before them.

[16–22] "Stealthily these ignorant creatures prowl the ashram sites, one after another, and take a mad delight in harassing the ascetics. They scatter the ladles and the other sacrificial implements, douse the fires with water, and break the vessels when the oblations are being performed. Since these wicked creatures have infested the ashrams, the seers are eager to abandon them and have been urging me to go to some other region. So before these foul creatures unleash physical violence on the ascetics, we must leave this ashram, Rāma. Not far from here there is a wonderful forest with many roots and fruits. It was our old ashram, and I will return there with my host. And you too, my son, should come away from here with us, if you are of a mind to do so, before Khara does some harm to you as well. For you to remain here with your wife is perilous, Rāghava, ever alert and powerful though you may be. It will soon bring you sorrow."

[23–26] Since the ascetic had spoken in this fashion, his uneasiness was such that nothing Prince Rāma offered in reply could hold him back. The chief of the community blessed Rāghava, comforted him, and asked his leave, and then, abandoning the ashram with his community, he departed. [qqq]Rāma escorted the host of seers, following them out to some distance, and did obeisance to the seer, their chief. They were well pleased, and, as they gave him leave, they repeated their advice. Then he returned to his own holy abode to take up his residence. Lordly Rāghava did not leave the ashram even for an instant now that the seers had quit it, since those very ascetics, whose virtues had been acquired from their conduct as seers, had always attended upon Rāghava.

Sarga 109

[1–5] After the ascetics had departed, Rāghava fell to thinking, and he found that, for many reasons, their dwelling place no longer pleased him, reflecting: "It was here that I met Bharata, my mothers, and the townsfolk, and my memory lingers on them still in their constant grief. Then, too, the camps great Bharata pitched and the dung of his elephants and horses have left things in a terrible state. We shall therefore go somewhere else." And so Rāghava set forth with Vaidehī and Lakṣmaṇa. Making his way to the ashram of Atri, glorious Rāma prostrated himself before the holy seer, and Atri received him like a son.

[6–9ab] He personally provided Rāma with hospitality, lavish and honorable, and he cheered Saumitri and illustrious Sītā. His aged and honored wife arrived, and the seer, wise in the ways of righteousness and earnest for the welfare of all creatures, invited her and cheered her too. She was Anasūyā, an illustrious ascetic who followed the way of righteousness, and that foremost of seers said to her, “Please receive Vaidehī.” And he told Rāma about his ascetic wife, who followed the way of righteousness:

[9cd–16] “Once, when the world was utterly ravaged by drought for ten years, it was Anasūyā who created roots and fruits and caused the Jāhnavī to flow, for the ascetic power she has acquired is awesome, and her ascetic vows adorn her. She has practiced intense asceticism for ten thousand years, my son, and by her vows all obstacles have been removed. It was she who, to advance the cause of the gods, straightaway reduced ten nights to one. Here she is, blameless prince. She is as your mother. Let Vaidehī approach her; she is an illustrious woman worthy of every creature’s adoration, an aged and ever amiable woman.” When the seer had finished speaking in this fashion, Rāghava replied, “So be it.” He then addressed Sītā, who was wise in the ways of righteousness: “Princess, you have heard what the sage has said. Please approach the ascetic woman at once, for your own good. Her name is Anasūyā, and her deeds have won her renown throughout the world. Approach the ascetic at once—she is most approachable.”

[17–20] Upon hearing Rāghava’s words, Sītā, princess of Mithilā, who always had his welfare at heart, then approached Atri’s wife, a woman wise in the ways of righteousness. Anasūyā was very old, her skin was wrinkled and loose, her hair white with age, and her body trembled constantly, like a plantain tree in the wind. Sītā carefully did obeisance to the illustrious and faithful woman and announced her name to her. After doing obeisance to the faultless ascetic, Vaidehī cupped her hands in reverence and delightedly asked after her health.

[21–24] She too felt delight when she saw how illustrious Sītā was following the way of righteousness, and she cheered her, exclaiming: “How fortunate you have such high regard for righteousness! How fortunate that you should abandon your kinfolk, your pride and wealth, proud Sītā, to follow Rāma when he was banished to the forest. [rrr]A woman who holds her husband dear—whether he is in the city or the forest, whether he is good or evil—gains worlds that bring great blessings. To a woman of noble nature

her husband is the supreme deity, however bad his character, however licentious or indigent he might be.

[25–28] “I can see no kinsman to surpass him, Vaidehī, far as I might look. Like ascetic power, which once acquired is never lost, a husband is ready and able, come what may. But wicked women have no such understanding of virtue and vice. Their hearts are the slaves of desire, and they lord it over their husbands. Indeed, Maithilī, women like that, who give in to the lure of what they should not do, are held up to infamy and fall away from righteousness. But virtuous women like you, who can tell good from bad in this world, come to reside in heaven just the same as men who have gained great merit.”

Sarga 110

[1–5] Addressed in this fashion by Anasūyā, Vaidehī ungrudgingly paid her homage and softly replied: “The instruction the noble lady has given me comes as no surprise. I myself am well aware that a husband is a woman’s *guru*. Even if my husband were utterly lacking in good behavior, my noble lady, still I would always obey him wholeheartedly. How much more readily would I obey a man praised for his virtues, a compassionate, self-disciplined, and righteous man, who is constant in his love, who defers to his mother and holds his father dear? Great Rāma behaves toward all the women of the king exactly as he does toward Kausalyā.

[6–9] “And any woman the king glanced at even once mighty Rāma would treat just like a mother, without the least resentment. For he cherished the king and he knows the meaning of righteousness. The instructions my mother-in-law imparted to me as I was coming to this desolate and frightening forest have remained firmly implanted in my heart. And I have retained as well the lessons my own mother taught me long ago, when I gave my hand before the marriage fire. But your words, follower of righteousness, have reminded me afresh of all this. Truly, no other ascetic act is required of a woman than obedience to her husband.

[10–15] “[sss]Sāvitrī is exalted in heaven because she showed obedience to her husband. Arundhatī too went up to the heavens by virtue of her obedience to her husband. And Rohiṇī, the very best of women and a goddess up in the heavens, is never seen even for an instant separated from the moon, her husband. Outstanding women such as these, firm in their

vows to their husbands, are exalted in the world of the gods by reason of their meritorious deeds." Anasūyā was delighted at hearing Sītā's words. She kissed her on the forehead, and to Sītā's delight she said: "I possess great ascetic power, acquired through various austerities. I will now make use of it for your enjoyment, Sītā of pure vows. Your words are fitting and proper, Maithilī, and they have pleased me. What is the most suitable thing I might do for you? Only tell me." "You have already done it," Sītā replied to the woman of ascetic power.

[16–20] These words pleased the righteous woman all the more, and she responded: "Come now, Sītā, I wish to repay the delight you have given me. Here are a choice heavenly garland, raiment, jewelry, and a balm, Vaidehī, a precious unguent. This that I give you, Sītā, will beautify your body, it will suit you perfectly, never spoil, and be yours forever. With this heavenly balm applied to your body, daughter of Janaka, you will adorn your husband to the same degree that Śrī adorns the eternal Viṣṇu." Maithilī then accepted the raiment, balm, jewelry, and garlands, a gift of love without compare.

[21–25] And after accepting the gifts, illustrious Sītā cupped her hands in reverence and waited in steadfast attendance upon the ascetic woman. Now, as Sītā was waiting upon her, the pious Anasūyā put a question to her about a certain tale she was fond of. She said: "It was at a ceremony of choosing a husband, they say, that glorious Rāghava won you, Sītā. Such, at least, is the tale that has reached my ears. I should like to hear that tale in full, Maithilī, exactly as it happened, in its entirety. Will you please tell it to me?" Addressed in this fashion, Sītā replied to that righteous woman: "Please listen," and told her this tale:

[26–30] "There is a righteous and mighty king of Mithilā named Janaka. He honors the code of the kshatriyas and rules his land judiciously. Once when, plough in hand, he was tilling the circle of fields, I arose, breaking through the earth—so the story goes—and became the daughter of the king. King Janaka was busy sowing grain by the fistful when he caught sight of me, my body all caked with dirt, and he was amazed. He was childless then, and with his own two hands he took me affectionately on his lap, saying, 'She shall be my daughter,' and showering me with affection. From out of the sky, so they say, there came a voice—a human voice but unlike any ever heard before: 'It is so, lord of men. By rights she is your daughter.'

[31–35] “My father, the righteous lord of Mithilā, was delighted. For in obtaining me the lord of men felt that he had obtained vast wealth. The virtuous king then entrusted me to the care of his favorite queen, the eldest, and she raised me affectionately, with a mother’s love. Now, when my father observed that I had reached the proper age for marriage, he began to worry, and he grew desolate, like a man impoverished by the loss of his wealth. For the father of an unmarried girl, though he be the equal of Indra on earth, finds himself humiliated by people, by his equals, and even by his inferiors. When the king perceived how close he was coming to being humiliated, he was launched upon a sea of worry, and like a man without a raft he could not make the shore.

[36–39] “Seeing I was not born of a woman’s womb, the protector of the land for all his thinking about it could not discover a fit and proper husband for me. But after giving it much thought, he had an idea. The wise king decided, ‘I will hold the ceremony of choosing a husband for my daughter.’ At that time he had a superb bow and pair of quivers with inexhaustible arrows. Great Varuṇa had graciously bestowed them on him at a great sacrifice. Because of its weight, humans could not budge the bow, no matter how hard they tried. Even lords of men were unable to bend it even in their dreams.

[40–45] “[ttt]So after he had extended invitations to the kings and put the bow on display, my truthful father made this declaration before the convocation of the lords of men, announcing: ‘The man who can raise this bow and string it shall have my daughter for his wife. Let no one doubt it!’ The kings looked at the stupendous bow, like a mountain in weight, and then unable even to lift it, they said farewell and departed. A long time passed until one day this splendid Rāghava arrived with Viśvāmitra to observe a sacrifice. My father paid special homage to valiant Rāma and his brother Lakṣmaṇa, and to righteous Viśvāmitra, saying, ‘Here are two Rāghavas,’ the sage told my father: ‘Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, sons of Daśaratha. They are eager to see the bow.’ Upon hearing this, my father had the bow brought out.

[46–52] “In the twinkling of an eye mighty Rāma bent it, and all at once the mighty prince strung and drew it. And so impetuously did he draw the bow that it broke in two right in the middle, and the sound it made as it fell was dreadful, like a thunderclap. Thereupon my father, true to his

agreement, raised up a splendid water vessel, ready to bestow me on Rāma. But prepared though my father was to bestow me, Rāghava would not accept me right away, for he did not yet know the will of his father, the lordly king of Ayodhyā. So my father invited my father-in-law, aged King Daśaratha, and afterward bestowed me on the celebrated Rāma. And my father, of his own accord, bestowed my younger sister, the lovely and virtuous Ūrmilā, as wife on Lakṣmaṇa. And that is how I was bestowed on Rāma, there at the ceremony of choosing a husband, and, in keeping with righteousness, I love my husband, the mightiest of men."

Sarga 111

[1–5] When that knower of righteousness, Anasūyā, had heard this extraordinary tale, she embraced Maithilī with both arms and kissed her on the forehead with the words: "How wonderfully and sweetly you spoke, so that each word, each syllable was clear. And now I have heard the whole story of how your ceremony of choosing a husband took place. I am truly charmed by your tale, my sweet-voiced child. But now the majestic sun is setting, bringing on the gracious night. You can hear the twitter of the birds that by day range far and wide in search of food. Now at twilight they are going to their roosts to sleep. [uuu]And here, carrying their water pots, are the sages returning in a group, wet from their ablutions, their barkcloth garments soaked with water.

[6–11] "The seers have performed their *agnihotra* rites according to precept—do you see the smoke, pearly as a dove's neck, carried by the wind? Though their leaves are really sparse, the trees all about, even in the distance, seem to have grown dense; the horizons are all lost to view. The creatures that wander by night are now beginning to move, and the deer of the ascetics' grove are settling down on the paths that lead to the altars. Adorned with stars, night is coming on, Sītā. You can see the moon in his mantle of light rising in the sky. You may go now and attend on Rāma, I give you leave. Your sweet storytelling has brought me deep contentment. But first, would you please adorn yourself, Maithilī, in my presence? Allow me to have the pleasure of seeing you, my child, beautified by these heavenly ornaments."

[12–15] Sītā then adorned herself, and looking like the daughter of the gods, she bowed her head to her and went off to Rāma. The eloquent

Rāghava took great delight in seeing Sītā adorned with the ascetic's gift of love. And Sītā, princess of Mithilā, explained everything to Rāma, how the ascetic had given her raiment, jewelry, and garlands as a gift of love. Rāma was delighted, and so was the great chariot-warrior Lakṣmaṇa, to see the honor conferred on Maithilī, an honor such as few mortals ever receive.

[16–20] And so, with the warm reception accorded him by the accomplished ascetics, the moon-faced delight of the Raghus happily passed the holy night. And when night was over and the forest ascetics had bathed and made their fire-offerings, the tigers among men asked leave of them. The forest ascetics, who followed the way of righteousness, informed them that travel through the forest was impeded by *rākṣasas*, telling Rāma: "But there is one path through the forest which the great seers use when they go to gather fruit. By this path, Rāghava, one can pass safely through the otherwise impassable forest." Then the twice-born brahman ascetics cupped their hands in reverence and blessed the journey of the slayer of his foes. And then, together with his wife and Lakṣmaṇa, Rāghava plunged into the forest, like the plunging sun into a bank of storm clouds.

The end of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*.

a Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
b Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
c Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
d Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
e Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
f Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
g Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
h Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
i Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
j Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
k Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
l Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
m Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
n Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
o Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
p Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
q Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
r Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
s Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
t Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
u Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.

v Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
w Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
x Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
y Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
z Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
aa Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
bb Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
cc Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
dd Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
ee Emendation: see PVR 2: 533; 816* added.
ff Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
gg Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
hh Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
ii Emendation: see PVR 2: 533.
jj Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
kk Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ll Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
mm Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
nn Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
oo Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
pp Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
qq Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
rr Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ss Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
tt Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
uu Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
vv Emendation: See PVR 2: 534.
ww Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
xx Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
yy Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
zz Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
aaa Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
bbb Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ccc Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ddd Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
eee Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
fff Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ggg Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
hhh Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
iii Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
jjj Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
kkk Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
lll Emendation: see PVR 2: 500.
mmm Emendation: see PVR 2: 500.
nnn Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ooo Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ppp Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
qqq Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.

rrr Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
sss Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
ttt Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.
uuu Emendation: see PVR 2: 534.

Chapter 3

The *Araṇyakāṇḍa*

Sarga 1

[1–5] Soon after entering the vast Daṇḍaka forest, Rāma, self-disciplined and unassailable, spied a circle of ashrams where ascetics dwelt. *Kuśa* grass and barkcloth garments were strewn about it, and, flooded with brahmanical splendor, it was as luminous and blinding to the eye as the orb of the sun in the sky. It was a place of refuge for all creatures; its grounds were always kept immaculate, and troupes of *apsarases* ever paid homage there and danced. It was beautified by its spacious fire-sanctuaries, its sacrificial implements—the ladles and all—its hide garments and *kuśa* grass, its bundles of kindling, pitchers of water, and roots and fruits. Tall forest trees encircled it, holy trees that bore sweet fruits. It was a place of worship, of offerings and oblations, a holy place echoing with the recitation of the *vedas*.

[6–8] Wildflowers carpeted it, and there was a lotus pond filled with lotuses. Ancient sages were present there, temperate men who ate only roots and fruits, wore barkcloth garments and black hides, and shone like fire or the sun. Supreme seers, holy men given to rigorous fasting, enhanced its beauty. It resembled the abode of Brahmā as the recitation of the *vedas* echoed through it, while illustrious brahmans who understood *brahman* enhanced its beauty still further.

[9–15] Upon seeing the circle of ashrams, powerful, majestic Rāghava unstrung his great bow and approached. And when the great seers, who were endowed with divine knowledge, saw Rāma, they joyfully approached him and illustrious Vaidehī. They were men strict in their vows who followed the ways of righteousness; and when they saw him, appearing like the rising moon, they received him with benedictions. With astonished expressions the forest dwellers beheld Rāma's handsome physique, his lovely attire, youthfulness, and splendor. And all the forest dwellers gazed at Vaidehī, Lakṣmaṇa, and Rāma with unblinking eyes as if at some

marvelous creatures. Then the illustrious sages, dedicated to the welfare of all creatures, ushered Rāghava into their leaf huts as their guest. And those illustrious sages, who were like fire, the purifier, and who followed the ways of righteousness, honored Rāma according to ritual precept and fetched him water.

[16–22] Knowing what was right, they offered the man roots, flowers, fruits of the forest, and their own ashram as well. And then, with their hands cupped in reverence, they said: "As the guardian of righteousness and the glorious refuge of his people, a king is worthy of reverence and esteem. He is a *guru* who wields the rod of punishment. A king is a fourth part of Indra himself and the protector of his subjects, Rāghava. Therefore, he enjoys the choicest luxuries and is honored by the world. We are residents of your realm and deserve your protection. Whether in the city or the forest, you are our king and the lord of the people. We have renounced violence, your majesty, and have conquered our senses and anger. So you must always protect us ascetics, for we are as your children." When they had spoken in this fashion, they honored Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa with fruits, roots, wildflowers, and other kinds of food. And still other firelike ascetics, perfected beings whose conduct accorded with custom, gratified Lord Rāma according to custom.

Sarga 2

[1–4] Having accepted such hospitality, Rāma took leave of all the sages around sunrise and then plunged back into the forest. With Lakṣmaṇa following behind, Rāma soon beheld the heart of the forest, the haunt of wolves and tigers, crowded with herds of various other animals; a tangle of trees, vines, and shrubs, with murky pools; the different sorts of birds fallen silent, and swarms of crickets chirping. And there, in the heart of the forest that teemed with ferocious animals, Kākutstha beheld, towering before him like a mountain peak, a roaring, man-eating monster.

[5–9ab] Sunken-eyed, huge-mouthed, his belly deformed, he was massive, loathsome, deformed, gigantic, monstrous, a terror to behold; clad in a tiger skin dripping with grease and spattered with blood, as terrifying to all creatures as Yama, the ender of all things, with jaws agape. On an iron lance he held impaled three lions, four tigers, two wolves, ten chitals, and the massive head of an elephant, complete with tusks and smeared with

gore. And he was roaring deafeningly. The moment he saw Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā, princess of Mithilā, he attacked them in a rage, like Yama, the ender of all things, attacking people at their fated hour.

[9cd–13] He let out a blood-chilling roar that seemed to shake the very earth. Then, seizing Vaidehī in his embrace, he strode off, crying: "You there, short-lived creatures who wear matted hair and barkcloth garments yet share a wife between you, who have entered the Daṇḍaka forest bearing bows and arrows and swords! How is it two ascetics are living with a young woman? You are evil men impersonating sages and following the path of unrighteousness. Who are you two? I am the *rākṣasa* Virādha. Armed with weapons, I constantly roam this impassable forest, feeding on the flesh of seers. This shapely woman shall be my wife. And as for you evil men, I will drink your blood on the field of battle."

[14–19] Upon hearing wicked Virādha's insolent and arrogant words, Janaka's daughter Sītā was stricken with terror and began to tremble violently, like a plantain tree in a high wind. When Rāghava saw the beautiful Sītā locked in Virādha's embrace, his mouth went dry, and he said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Just see, gentle brother! King Janaka's daughter, an illustrious princess raised in perfect comfort and my virtuous wife, is caught in Virādha's embrace. Lakṣmaṇa, everything Kaikeyī planned for us, chose with her boon, and desired in her heart, has come true all at once. She, my middle mother, not content with the kingship and farsighted on her son's behalf, drove me—who wish all creatures well—into the forest. She should now at last be pleased. That someone else should touch Vaidehī pains me as nothing ever has, not the theft of my kingdom, Saumitri, nor even Father's death."

[20–24] But even as Kākutstha, overwhelmed with tears and grief, was speaking in this fashion, Lakṣmaṇa, enraged and hissing like a cornered snake, said: "You are the equal of Indra Vāsava and the defender of all creatures, Kākutstha! And yet you stand there as if defenseless while I am here ready to serve you. What good is this complaining? In my rage I will kill the *rākṣasa* Virādha this instant with a single arrow, and when the breath of life has left him, the earth shall drink in his blood. The rage I felt toward Bharata in his lust for kingship I shall vent against Virādha, just like Indra, wielder of the *vajra*, unleashing his bolt upon a mountain. Set in motion by the forceful movement of my arm, my great arrow shall crash

down upon his great chest, ripping the life from his body, and he will go crashing down sprawled upon the earth.”

Sarga 3

[1–7] Now, once again Virādha spoke, making the forest resound: “Identify yourselves to me, as I demanded! Who are you two, and where are you going?” When the *rākṣasa*, his face ablaze, was questioning him, mighty Rāma told him of his family, the Ikṣvākus: “Know that we are two virtuous kshatriyas residing in the forest. But we want to know about you. Who are you who roam the Daṇḍakas?” Virādha then replied to the truly valorous Rāma: “Very well, I shall tell you, your majesty. Now learn about me, Rāghava. I am, they say, the son of Jaya, and my mother is Śatahradā. All the *rākṣasas* on earth call me Virādha. Through ascetic practices I won the favor of Brahmā, who granted that no weapon of this world could ever kill me, nor even cut or pierce me. Abandon this woman and, without so much as a backward glance, hurry and begone the way you came. Then I shall not take your life.”

[8–12] His eyes red with rage, Rāma replied to Virādha, the hideous, evil-minded *rākṣasa*: “Curse you, vile and wretched creature. You are surely courting death—and death you shall find now in battle. Do not move. You cannot escape me alive.” Rāma then strung his bow, quickly affixed one well-honed arrow after another, and shot them at the *rākṣasa*. He fired seven arrows from his taut-strung bow, swift, gold-feathered arrows that flew like Suparṇa or the wind. Trimmed with peacock feathers, the arrows, which were like fire, the purifier, tore through Virādha’s body and fell to the ground dripping with blood.

[13–15] Seizing a lance like Indra’s flagstaff, he let out a tremendous roar, looking for all the world like Yama, the ender of all things, with jaws agape. The lance resembled a thunderbolt or some blazing object in the sky, but with two arrows Rāma, foremost of warriors, smashed it to pieces. Then, all at once, Saumitri broke the left arm of the terrible *rākṣasa* while Rāma broke the right one.

[16–21ab] His arms broken, the *rākṣasa* Virādha, massive as a storm cloud, fell headlong in agony to the ground, like a mountain shattered by a thunderbolt. Then he said to Kākutstha, bull among men: “[a]Now I realize, dear boy, that you must be Rāma, the worthy son of Kausalyā, and that this

is illustrious Vaidehī, and this, the illustrious Lakṣmaṇa. I was cursed to take on this monstrous *rākṣasa* body. I am really the *gandharva* Tumburu, and it was Vaiśravaṇa who cursed me. But I begged his forgiveness, and the glorious god said to me: 'When Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, slays you in battle, then you shall recover your true form and go to heaven.' Such were King Vaiśravaṇa's words. Because of my passion for the *apsaras* Rambhā, I had grown careless in my attendance on the king, so he grew angry and cursed me.

[21cd–24] "By your grace, I have been freed from this dreadful curse and may now return to my true abode. I wish you well, slayer of your foes. A league and a half from here, my son, lives righteous Śarabhaṅga, a great and powerful seer, radiant as the sun. You should visit him at once; he will see to your welfare. But first please consign me to a grave, Rāma, then go your way in safety. Such is the immemorial custom with respect to dead *rākṣasas*. Those that are buried in a grave gain worlds that are eternal."

[25–27] Having spoken in this fashion to Kākutstha, the mighty Virādha, tormented by the arrows, left his body, about to enter heaven. As he was cast into a pit, the pointed-eared Virādha let out a monstrous, deafening roar, howling at the top of his voice. Once they had killed the *rākṣasa* and recovered Maithilī, the two brothers, bearing their gold-worked bows, relaxed at their ease in the great forest like the moon and the sun, maker of day, in the heavens.

Sarga 4

[1–6] After mighty Rāma had killed the awesomely powerful *rākṣasa* Virādha, he embraced Sītā and comforted her. Then, turning to his splendid brother Lakṣmaṇa, he said: "This trackless forest is a dreadful place, and we are not forest dwellers. Let us go at once to visit the ascetic Śarabhaṅga." And so Rāghava set out for Śarabhaṅga's ashram. Nearing the abode of the godlike Śarabhaṅga, a sage purified by asceticism, Rāma beheld a great marvel. He beheld Indra himself, lord of the wise gods. His body was as luminous as fire or the sun; he stood without touching the ground. His jewelry was sparkling bright, no speck of dust sullied the garment he wore, and many great beings resembling the god himself were worshiping him.

[7–15] And near the god he saw a chariot hovering in midair, looking like the morning sun, with bay steeds harnessed to it. There was an

immaculate parasol, like a bank of silvery clouds or the disk of the moon, adorned with many-colored garlands; and a pair of splendid, priceless yak-tail fly whisks with golden handles held by two fair women who waved them over the god's head. *Gandharvas*, immortal gods, perfected beings, and many supreme seers sang glorious hymns in praise of him as he hovered in midair. At the sight of Indra of the hundred sacrifices, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Once, long ago, we heard that Śakra, the god invoked far and wide, possesses horses, divine horses that hover in midair. These are surely those very bay steeds. And the hundreds upon hundreds of young men who stand sword in hand around his chariot, wearing earrings and necklaces that flash like fire upon their chests—all of them, Saumitri, tiger among men, would appear to be twenty-five years old. And that, they say, is invariably the age of gods, the very age, it would seem, of these handsome tigers among men. Stay here a moment with Vaidehī, Lakṣmaṇa, while I find out for certain who this splendid being beside the chariot might be."

[16–19] And having instructed Saumitri in this way with the words, "Stay here," Kākutstha set out for Śarabhañga's ashram. Seeing Rāma approaching, Indra, the lord of Śacī, took leave of Śarabhañga, then turned to the wise gods and said: "That man approaching is Rāma. Before he can address me, conduct me to my residence; hereafter he may see me. Once he has accomplished his task and gained victory, I will see him without delay. For he has a great deed to do, one impossible for anyone else to accomplish."

[20–23] Having said this, Indra, wielder of the *vajra*, took his leave of the ascetic. After showing him high honor, the tamer of his foes went to heaven on his chariot harnessed with bay steeds. When thousand-eyed Indra had departed, Rāghava proceeded with his companions and came upon Śarabhañga as he was performing the *agnihotra* rites. Rāma clasped his feet, and Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa did the same. The sage invited them in and procured them seats, and with his permission they sat down. Rāghava then asked about Śakra's visit, and Śarabhañga explained everything to him:

[24–28] "Brahmā, the granter of boons, wishes to conduct me to the Brahmaloka. By severe ascetic practices have I won it, Rāma, a place impossible for impure men to reach. But I knew you were living nearby, tiger among men, and I would not go to the Brahmaloka without first having seen you here as my honored guest. Now that we have met, I will go

to the highest heaven, where the gods reside. Blessed and imperishable are the worlds I have won, the worlds of Brahmā and of heaven's vault. Tiger among men, please accept the worlds that are now mine." So the seer Śarabhañga spoke, and Rāghava, tiger among men and master of all *śāstras*, made this reply: "I hope to win all these worlds for myself, great sage. What I need now, however, is for you to advise me of some place to dwell in these woods."

[29–31] Addressed in this fashion by Rāghava, Śakra's equal in power, wise Śarabhañga addressed him once more: "Make your way to the sacred region where the ascetic Sutīkṣṇa lives. He will arrange a dwelling place for you in a lovely part of the forest. Tiger among men, the path is there. But stay one moment, my son, and watch as I abandon my body, as a snake abandons its worn-out skin."

[32–36] Then, having stoked the fire and made the oblation of clarified butter, mighty Śarabhañga, expert in vedic *mantras*, entered the fire, eater of oblations. The fire consumed the hair on the great sage's body, the hair on his head, his worn-out skin, his bones, and whatever flesh and blood remained to him. And Śarabhañga became a youth once more, brilliant as fire, the purifier, and he arose radiant from the altar of fire. Passing beyond the worlds of those who maintain the sacred fires, beyond those of the great seers and of the gods, he ascended to the Brahmaloka. [b]The bull among the twice-born, a man of holy deeds, beheld Grandfather Brahmā with his retinue in his abode, and when the Grandfather saw the twice-born brahman he rejoiced and said, "I bid you welcome."

Sarga 5

[1–5] When Śarabhañga had gone to heaven, hosts of sages assembled and approached Rāma Kākutstha of immense blazing energy. There were *vaikhānasas* and *vālakhilyas*, *saṃprakṣālas* and *marīcipas*. There were many ascetics of the sort that pound their food with stones or subsist on leaves. Some were sages who use their teeth as mortars, or keep themselves submerged; who subsist on water, or eat nothing but air. There were those who make their abode in the open, who always sleep upon the ground, or dwell only in the heights. There were self-mastering men who clothe themselves in wet garments or ceaselessly intone their prayers; who are ever engaged in ascetic practices or subject themselves to the five ascetic

fires. All of them were possessed of brahmanical majesty and intently concentrated in *yoga*, all the ascetics who came to see Rāma in the ashram of Śarabhañga.

[6–10] When the host of righteous seers had come before him, they spoke earnestly to Rāma, champion of righteousness and one most wise in the ways of righteousness. They said: "[c]You are lord and master of the House of the Ikṣvākus and of this earth, great chariot-warrior, like Indra the munificent among the gods. You are famed throughout the three worlds for your greatness and valor. Your filial devotion is profound, no less your truthfulness and righteousness. We have come before you, great prince, who know and cherish the ways of righteousness, and we must speak out because we are in need. Please forgive us for this, lord. It would be an act of great unrighteousness, dear Rāma, for a lord of the earth to take a sixth part in taxes without providing protection as though to his sons.

[11–14] "But he who strives constantly and energetically to protect all who live in his realm as though they were his very own life, or sons even dearer to him than life, secures long-lasting fame, Rāma, for many years to come. He reaches the abode of Brahmā and is exalted even there. A king who protects his subjects as he rightly should acquires a fourth part of the supreme righteousness amassed by a sage who lives on nothing but roots and fruits. Here a great throng of forest hermits has gathered, brahmans most of them. They are being horribly slaughtered by *rākṣasas*, undefended, Rāma, though you are present to defend them.

[15–18] "Come and see the corpses of the many purified sages slain in every imaginable way by dreaded *rākṣasas* in the forest. The sages who dwell by the Pampā River and along the Mandākinī and those living on Mount Citrakūṭa are being butchered. We can tolerate no longer these terrible outrages that ferocious *rākṣasas* are committing against ascetics in the forest. So we have taken refuge with you, our one sure place of refuge. Please save us, Rāma, lest we be slaughtered by the night-roaming *rākṣasas*."

[19–21] After hearing out the distraught ascetics, the righteous prince Kākutstha said to them all: "You have no need to plead with me; I stand at the bidding of all those in distress. It must have been to accomplish your purpose that chance has brought me here. My sojourn in the forest shall bear great fruit. I am ready to slay in battle the *rākṣasas*, the enemies of

ascetics." When the mighty and noble prince, firmly keeping to the ways of righteousness, had bestowed this boon upon the ascetics, he set out with them and Lakṣmaṇa to visit Sutīkṣṇa.

Sarga 6

[1–5] Then Rāma, scorcher of his enemies, set out for Sutīkṣṇa's ashram with his brother, Sītā, and those twice-born men. He traveled a long way, crossing deep rivers, until he saw a huge mountain towering before him like a thundercloud. The two Rāghavas, foremost of the Ikṣvākus, then made their way with Sītā into a grove densely wooded with different kinds of trees. And on his way he spied, deep in the gloomy forest with its many fruit-bearing and flowering trees, an ashram garlanded with barkcloth garments. There sat the ascetic Sutīkṣṇa, a man grown old in asceticism, his hair matted with dirt and mud. Rāma addressed him according to precept:

[6–11] "Blessed one, I am Rāma, and I have come to see you. Will you address me, great seer, you who are wise in the ways of righteousness and strive for truth?" The sage then turned his gaze upon heroic Rāma, foremost of those who uphold righteousness, and drawing him into his arms he said: "You are most welcome here, heroic Rāma, foremost of those who uphold righteousness. With your arrival this ashram seems to have found its rightful protector at last. I have been waiting for you, mighty and glorious prince, and that is why I have not yet ascended hence to the world of the gods, leaving my body behind on the earth. I heard, when you reached Citrakūṭa, that you had been deposed from the kingship. The king of gods, Indra of the hundred sacrifices, has come here, Kākutstha, and he told me that I have won all worlds by my holy deeds. Come then, with your wife and Lakṣmaṇa, and by my grace enjoy yourself in the worlds won by my asceticism, worlds where gods and seers reside."

[12–14] Then, like Indra Vāsava addressing Brahmā, the self-controlled Rāma replied to Sutīkṣṇa, a great and brilliant seer awesome in asceticism and truthful in speech, with these words: "I hope to win those worlds for myself, great sage. What I need now, however, is for you to advise me of some place to dwell in these woods. For you are knowledgeable in all matters and dedicated to the welfare of all creatures—that is what the great Śarabhaṅga Gautama said of you."

[15–20] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, the great and world-renowned seer, filled with deep joy, made this gentle reply: "This very ashram, Rāma, has every possible virtue; you may pass your time here pleasantly. Seers in great numbers frequent the place, and roots and fruits are always plentiful. Herds of animals come and go at this ashram, glorious prince; how charming they are wandering about without the least fear." When he had heard the great seer's words, Lakṣmaṇa's eldest brother drew forth his bow and arrow and firmly replied: "Most illustrious sage, I might chance to slay the herds of animals congregating here with one of my sharp-edged arrows that flash like lightning bolts. You would then be implicated in it, and what worse misfortune could there be than that? No, I do not think it would be good for me to stay for very long in this ashram."

[21–22] When Rāma had spoken in this fashion to the granter of boons, he went to perform the *sandhyā* rites. After the evening *sandhyā* rites were over, he arranged to spend the night there. When twilight was past and he saw night coming on, the great Sutīkṣṇa himself prepared pure food, such as is proper fare for ascetics, and offered it to the two bulls among men.

Sarga 7

[1–4] Honored by Sutīkṣṇa, Rāma, together with Saumitri, spent the night there, waking at dawn. Arising at the proper time, Rāghava bathed with Sītā in ice-cold water fragrant with the scent of lotuses. Next, at the appropriate moment and according to precept, Vaidehī, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa worshiped the fire and the gods in the forest, the refuge of ascetics. Thus purified and seeing that the sun, maker of day, was rising, they approached Sutīkṣṇa and gently said to him:

[5–9] "We have passed the night comfortably, holy one, and you have shown us honor, honorable sage. We now beg leave of you. We wish to set forth, as the sages are urging us to make haste. We are hastening to visit all the ashrams belonging to the holy seers who live in the Daṇḍaka forest. Before the sun shines too brightly, becoming too hot to endure—like a lowborn man, who has acquired wealth unrighteously—we wish to take our leave of you. We do so together with these great sages, who are constant in righteousness, tempered by asceticism, and like smoldering, purifying fires." Then, having said, "We wish to go," Rāghava, together with Saumitri and Sītā, paid homage to the sage, touching his feet.

[10–16] As the two men touched his feet, the great sage raised them up, warmly embraced them, and said to them with affection: “May you and Saumitri go your way in safety, Rāma, along with Sītā here, who follows you like a shadow. Hero, you must see the lovely ashrams of these sages living in the Daṇḍaka forest, men purified by their ascetic practices. You will see forests all in blossom, abounding in fruits and roots, with herds of tame animals and flocks of tame birds; ponds and lakes with clumps of blooming lotuses and sparkling clear water, teeming with waterfowl; mountain cascades that delight the eye; and delightful stretches of wilderness echoing with the cries of peacocks. Go then, my child, and you too, Saumitri, and may you return once more to my ashram after your visit.”

[17–19] Addressed in this fashion, Rāma replied with the words, “So be it,” and, after reverently circling the sage, he and Saumitri prepared to set forth. Large-eyed Sītā then handed the brothers their splendid pairs of quivers, their bows, and gleaming swords. Strapping on the splendid quivers and taking up their loud-twanging bows, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa left the ashram to begin their journey.

Sarga 8

[1–5] As her husband, the delight of the Raghus, was setting forth with Sutīkṣṇa’s leave, Vaidehī addressed him in an affectionate tone of voice: “Acquiring great righteousness requires the greatest care, and only he who avoids deliberate misdeeds can gain it in this world. And as for deliberate misdeeds, there are just three. Telling lies is very bad, but the other two, sexual intercourse with another man’s wife and unprovoked violence, are even worse. You have never been, nor will you ever be, guilty of telling lies, Rāghava. And how could you possibly lust after the wife of another man, an act that destroys righteousness? Both of these misdeeds can be avoided by those who have mastered their senses, and I know you control your senses, my handsome husband.

[6–10] “But the third one, violence—the taking of life recklessly and without provocation—to this you may be prone. For you have promised to slay the *rākṣasas* in combat, my heroic husband, in order to protect the seers who live in the Daṇḍaka forest. And to this end you have set forth to the forest known as Daṇḍaka, in company with your brother, bearing bows and arrows. As I watch you setting out, my mind grows filled with anxiety,

though thinking about your deeds usually brings me the greatest happiness. For I disapprove, my heroic husband, of our going to the Daṇḍakas. I shall explain the reason why; so please listen to what I have to say.

[11–15] “You and your brother are going to the forest, bow and arrow in hand, and I fear that when you see any of the forest dwellers, you might loose your arrows. For in this world a bow to a kshatriya is like kindling to a fire: if it comes too close, his blazing energy flares up wildly. Once upon a time, my great-armed husband, there was a truthful and pure ascetic who lived far off in a holy forest where animals and birds delighted to come. In order to obstruct his ascetic practices Indra, the lord of Śacī, came to his ashram in the guise of a soldier, sword in hand. And there in that ascetic’s ashram he deposited the splendid sword, given by way of a pledge to him who practiced holy asceticism.

[16–21] “But after receiving the weapon, the sage grew obsessed with keeping that pledge, and even wandered in the forest guarding the trust that had been committed to him. Thus, even when he went out to gather fruits and roots, he would not go without the sword, so obsessed was he with keeping that pledge. And from his constantly bearing the weapon, the ascetic’s heart by degrees turned violent, and he forgot his ascetic vows. The sage then took delight in wanton violence, became reckless, and was drawn over to unrighteousness. And so, simply because he lived with the weapon, he went to hell. It is only out of love and respect that I am reminding—not instructing—you that on no account should you take up your bow and, unprovoked, turn your thoughts to killing the *rākṣasas* of the Daṇḍakas. My mighty husband, I disapprove of your killing creatures that have done you no wrong.

[22–25] “Mighty kshatriyas, finding themselves in the forests inhabited by men who practice self-restraint, need bows only for protecting those in distress. How incongruous they are, weapons and the forest, the kshatriya class and the practice of asceticism—it is all so at odds. We must respect the customs of the place. Wicked thoughts, my noble husband, arise from handling weapons. Once you are back in Ayodhyā, you may follow the kshatriya code. But my joy would be complete, like that of my mother-in-law and father-in-law, if you would renounce the kingship altogether and become a contented sage.

[26–29] “From righteousness comes material wealth, from righteousness comes happiness. Through righteousness one gains everything. The very essence of this world is righteousness. But righteousness belongs only to the vigilant, those who relentlessly control themselves by various acts of self-restraint. True happiness is not difficult to obtain. Remaining ever pure of heart, gentle husband, you must follow the ways of righteousness appropriate to an ascetics’ grove. But then, you already know all this just as it is, and all that pertains to it throughout the three worlds. It is only a woman’s impertinence that has made me speak this way, for who would presume to tell you what righteousness is? But still, please give it careful thought, together with your younger brother, and do without delay whatever you think best.”

Sarga 9

[1–5] After Rāma had listened to the words that Vaidehī, princess of Mithilā, had spoken in her devotion to her husband, he then replied with firm adherence to righteousness: “This is sound advice, my lady. What you have said in your affection is worthy of you and testifies to your high birth, righteous daughter of Janaka. And yet, I may repeat the words you yourself uttered, my lady: ‘Kshatriyas only bear bows so that no voice may be raised in distress.’ And the sages who are undertaking strict vows in the Daṇḍaka forest are indeed distressed, Sītā. Although they are themselves the refuge of others, they have taken refuge with me. Engaged in the practice of righteousness, they have been dwelling in the forest, living on fruits and roots, but now they are terrified of the savage *rākṣasas* and can find no peace.

[6–9] “Time and again, while they are engaged in various penances in the forest, the ferocious, man-eating *rākṣasas* come and devour them. So many were being devoured that the best of twice-born sages living in the Daṇḍaka forest came to me and said, ‘Please save us!’ And when I heard those words that fell from their lips, I did obeisance at their feet and said this: ‘Please forgive me, sirs! How boundless is my shame that when I should be seeking out seers like you, you have had instead to seek me out.’ And in the presence of those twice-born men I spoke up and said, ‘What is it I must do?’

[10–15] "All the assembled host then spoke these words in a single voice: 'There are many *rākṣasas* in the Daṇḍaka forest, who can take on any form at will. They are brutally oppressing us, Rāma, and you must save us. When the time for the oblation has come, faultless prince, and at the times for the lunar rites, *rākṣasas* who feed on raw flesh, and are all but immune from attack themselves, attack us. Assaulted by the *rākṣasas*, the ascetics in their distress have sought some refuge, and you, sir, are our one sure refuge. Granted, we could kill the night-roaming *rākṣasas* through our ascetic powers, but we are reluctant to squander what took so long to amass. Ascetic practice is ever beset by obstacles, Rāghava, and is so difficult to perform. That is why, although we are being devoured by *rākṣasas*, we do not unleash our curse. You and your brother, therefore, must protect us from oppression by the *rākṣasas* who live in the Daṇḍaka forest, for you are our sole defender in the forest.'

[16–21] "And when I heard their words, daughter of Janaka, I promised to do my utmost to safeguard the seers of the Daṇḍaka forest. And having once promised them something, I could never, so long as I live, violate my pledge to the sages. For truthfulness has always been the one thing I cherish. Indeed, I would sooner give up my life, Sītā, or even you and Lakṣmaṇa, than break a promise I have made, especially to brahmans. Therefore, I am bound to safeguard the seers. I would do this even unasked, Vaidehī; how much more so now that I have given my word? Still, I am deeply gratified by what you have said, Sītā, in your affection for me and your goodness of heart. No woman offers guidance to a man she does not love. It was worthy of you, my lovely wife, and becoming to one of your House." So the great Rāma spoke to his beloved Sītā, daughter of the king of Mithilā. Then, armed with his bow and in the company of Lakṣmaṇa, he traveled on to the lovely forests of austerities.

Sarga 10

[1–6] Rāma went in front, fair-waisted Sītā in the middle, and behind followed Lakṣmaṇa, bow in hand. As they traveled on with Sītā, they saw varied mountain landscapes, forests, lovely rivers with *sārasa* cranes and *cakravākas* upon the sandbanks, ponds covered with lotuses and thronged with waterbirds, chitals massed in herds, rutting horned buffaloes and boars, and elephants butting at trees. They had traveled a long distance and the sun

was hanging low when all at once they spied a lovely pond one league across. It was blanketed with white and blue lotuses, adorned with herds of elephants, and filled with waterfowl, *sārasa* cranes, *haṃsas*, and *kādambas*.

[7–10] From within the lovely clear pool could be heard the sound of singing and musical instruments, but there was no one to be seen. Their curiosity aroused, Rāma and the great chariot-warrior Lakṣmaṇa proceeded to question a sage named Dharmabhṛt: "We are all filled with curiosity, great sage, upon hearing this wonderful sound. What can it be? Please tell us." [d]Addressed by Rāghava in this fashion, the righteous sage proceeded to recount in full the story of the lake.

[11–15] "Rāma, this pond, filled with water in every season, is called Pañcāpsaras, 'Pond of the Five *Apsarases*.' The sage Māṇḍakarṇi fashioned it by means of his ascetic power. Now, the great sage Māṇḍakarṇi practiced intense asceticism for tens of thousands of years, subsisting on air and ever immersed in the water. Because of this, all the gods grew anxious, and, led by Agni, god of fire, they all assembled and said, 'This sage is seeking to displace one of us.' Then all the gods directed the five chief *apsarases*, heavenly women dazzling as lightning, to disrupt his ascetic practices. Then, in order to accomplish the purpose of the gods, these *apsarases* brought the sage under the spell of the god of love in spite of his knowing right from wrong.

[16–20] "Those five *apsarases* became the sage's wives, and so he built a house for them hidden within this pond. And the five *apsarases* have lived there happily ever since, making love to the sage, who regained his youth by means of his ascetic power. As they play together one can hear, as now, the notes of musical instruments mingling with the tinkle of jewelry and the enchanting sound of singing." "Wonderful!" said glorious Rāghava and his brother when they heard the account given by the purified sage. While the sage was telling his tale, Rāma spied a circle of ashrams, with *kuśa* grass and barkcloth garments strewn about, and surrounded by various trees.

[21–27] With Vaidehī and Lakṣmaṇa, Rāghava Kākutstha then entered the majestic circle of ashrams, where he stayed for a while most comfortably, honored by the great seers. [e]And then that expert in great weapons visited by turns the ashrams of the ascetics with whom he had previously been staying. In one place Rāghava lived comfortably for some

ten months, in others a year, or four months, five, six, or more; here an extra month, there a month and a half, three months, or eight. And while he was living this agreeable life and enjoying himself in the ashrams of the ascetics, ten years went by. After he had circulated in this way, majestic Rāghava, a knower of righteousness, returned with Sītā to the ashram of Sutīkṣṇa. The sages honored Rāma on his return to the ashram, and there, too, the tamer of his foes lived for some time.

[28–35] Now, on one occasion, while Kākutstha was staying in the ashram and waiting in attendance on the great sage Sutīkṣṇa, he politely addressed him with these words: "Holy one, I have often heard, in the tales of storytellers, that Agastya, the best of sages, lives in this wilderness. But I do not know the place because this forest is so vast. Where is the holy ashram of the great and wise seer? By your grace, sir, I should like to pay a visit there with my younger brother and Sītā to do obeisance to the sage Agastya. For it is a wish most fondly cherished in my heart that I might personally serve that foremost of sages." When the sage Sutīkṣṇa had heard the words of righteous Rāma, son of Daśaratha, he joyfully replied: "I myself, Rāghava, was planning to suggest the very same thing. You should take Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā and go to pay a visit to Agastya. How fortunate that you should bring this up with me yourself. Now I shall tell you, my child, where the great sage Agastya lives.

[36–41] "You need to go four leagues south of this ashram, my son, and there you will come upon the great, majestic ashram of Agastya's brother. It is in a level forest clearing, adorned by a grove of pepper plants; a lovely place with many flowers and fruits, resounding with the cries of different birds. There are all kinds of pleasant lotus ponds there, brimming with clear water, abounding in *haṃsas* and *kāraṇḍavas*, and adorned with *cakravākas*. You should spend one night there, Rāma, and early the next morning you must travel southward, skirting the dense forest. There, after traveling one league more, you will come upon Agastya's ashram in a delightful forest clearing surrounded by many trees. Vaidehī will enjoy herself there, and so will you and Lakṣmaṇa. For it is a lovely forest clearing encircled by many trees. If you are of a mind to see the great sage Agastya, why not set your mind on going this very day, illustrious prince?"

[42–45] After listening to the sage, Rāma and his brother did obeisance to him and set forth with Sītā to meet Agastya, seeing on their way forests

of brilliant color, cloudlike mountains, lakes, and rivers as the road presented them to view. As he was proceeding at his ease along the way by which Sutīkṣṇa had directed him, he spoke these words to Lakṣmaṇa in deep delight: “That is surely the ashram of the brother of the great and holy sage Agastya that I see.

[46–50] “For here along the way one can make out the trees of the grove, thousands of them bending under the weight of their fruits and flowers. And from the grove, carried on the breeze, comes the smell of ripe peppers with its sudden rush of pungency. Here and there you can see piles of logs heaped up and, along the way, the sheaves of *darbha* grass the color of cat’s-eye beryl. And there in the heart of the forest—like a mountain peak shrouded in black cloud—looms the column of smoke from the purifying fires in the ashram. And at the secluded bathing places on the river there are twice-born men; they have completed their ritual baths and are making flower offerings with blossoms gathered by their own hands.

[51–55] “Such was Sutīkṣṇa’s description, dear brother, exactly as I heard him give it. This must surely be the ashram of Agastya’s brother. It was his virtuous brother, with the good of all at heart, who stamped out the threat of death and made this region a sure place of refuge. Once upon a time two brothers lived together here, the cruel Vātāpi and Ilvala, great *asuras* and brahman-killers. The pitiless Ilvala, disguised as a brahman and speaking chaste Sanskrit, would invite sages to *śrāddha* feasts. His brother would then take on the form of a ram, and Ilvala would ritually prepare him and feed him to the twice-born men, in accordance with the rite prescribed for the *śrāddha*.

[56–60] “Then, once the sages had eaten, Ilvala would exclaim in a loud voice, ‘Vātāpi, come forth!’ And, upon hearing his brother’s summons, Vātāpi, bleating like a ram, would burst forth, splitting open the body of every single brahman present. In this way the eaters of raw flesh, who could take on any form at will, in league with each other killed thousands of brahmans time and again. The gods then sought the aid of the great seer Agastya, and he presented himself at the *śrāddha* feast, they say, and ate the great *asura*. Thereupon Ilvala, proclaiming the feast at an end and offering the sprinkling of the hands, called to his brother, ‘Come forth!’

[61–65] “But as he was calling his brahman-killing brother, the wise Agastya, best of sages, smiling, said to him: ‘Whence can a *rākṣasa* whom I

have digested possibly come forth? This brother of yours, who had taken the form of a ram, has gone to the abode of Yama.’ Now, when he heard those words that told him his brother was dead, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* flew into a rage and began to assault the sage. He rushed upon the lord of the twice-born brahmans, but the sage, possessed of brilliant, blazing energy, incinerated him with his fiery eye, so that he died. The ashram here, adorned with ponds and forests, must belong to the brother of that sage, who in compassion for brahmans did a deed no one else could do.”

[66–70] While Rāma was conversing in this fashion with Saumitri, the sun set and the moment of twilight arrived. After performing the evening *sandhyā* rituals with his brother according to precept, he entered the ashram and did obeisance to the seer. Rāghava, suitably received by the sage, spent that one night there, making a meal of roots and fruits. When night had passed and the sun’s immaculate disk appeared, Rāghava asked leave of Agastya’s brother: “Blessed one, I bid you farewell. I have passed the night comfortably, and I now ask leave of you, for I am going to see your *guru*, your elder brother.”

[71–75] “You may go,” he replied, and the delight of the Raghus set out on the road as directed, all the while observing the forest. Soon Rāma came to a place where he saw woodland trees by the hundreds: *nīvāras*, *panasas*, *tālas*, *timiśas*, *vañjulas*, *dhavas*, *ciribilvas*, *madhūkas*, *bilvas*, and *tindukas*. They were all in flower and twined about by flower-topped vines; their bark was rubbed raw by elephants’ trunks; they were crowded with monkeys and resounded with flocks of wild birds by the hundreds. As mighty Lakṣmaṇa, bringer of glory, followed close behind, lotus-eyed Rāma said to him:

[76–80] “Seeing that the leaves on these trees are so glossy and the birds and beasts so gentle, the ashram of the great, purified seer must not be far away. He who is known throughout the world as Agastya, ‘Stopper of the Mountain,’ by reason of his own deed—that must be his ashram we see, garlanded with barkcloth garments, where the forest is wrapped in thick smoke and the cries of various birds are echoing; a place where wild beasts grow tame and the weary traveler finds rest. It was this virtuous man, with the good of all at heart, who stamped out the threat of death and made the southern region a sure place of refuge. This must be the ashram of that seer whose power made the *rākṣasas* look on this southern region with terror and give up their hold on it.

[81–85] “From the moment the virtuous sage set foot in this region, the night-roaming *rākṣasas* ceased hostilities and were pacified. And so this southern region, now safe from attack by savage creatures, is known by the name of that holy man throughout the three worlds. The greatest of mountains, Mount Vindhya, heeds his command and no longer grows, as it once did, to obstruct the course of the sun, bringer of light. Yes, this must be the ashram of long-lived Agastya, whose deeds are renowned throughout the world, a majestic ashram where the beasts that inhabit it are tame. This goodly man, revered by the world and always eager that the good should prosper, will ensure our welfare now that we have sought him out.

[86–92] “Here, my dear and lordly brother, I will propitiate the great sage Agastya and live out what time remains of my sojourn in the forest. Here gods and *gandharvas*, perfected beings and supreme seers constantly attend upon Agastya, a seer given to rigorous fasting. Here no untruthful man may live, no one cruel or guileful, malevolent or licentious; that is the sort of sage he is. Here dwell gods and *yakṣas*, great serpents and birds, they too given to rigorous fasting and eager to uphold the ways of righteousness. Here great perfected beings cast off their bodies and in new bodies ascend to heaven as supreme seers, in flying palaces gleaming like the sun. Here gods will make one a *yakṣa* or offer immortality or various kingly offices to good creatures who propitiate them. We have come to his ashram. Enter first, Saumitri, and inform the seer that Sītā and I have arrived.”

Sarga 11

[1–4] Upon entering the ashram, Rāghava’s younger brother Lakṣmaṇa came upon a disciple of Agastya’s and addressed him with these words: “The powerful Rāma, eldest son of King Daśaratha, has come with his wife, Sītā, to see the sage. I am Lakṣmaṇa, his younger brother, and his faithful and devoted helper. You may perhaps have heard of me. By order of our father, we have entered the fearsome forest. We all wish to see the holy one. Please inform him.”

[5–8] Upon hearing Lakṣmaṇa’s words, the ascetic replied with a word of assent and entered the fire-sanctuary to inform the sage. Entering, he cupped his hands in reverence and promptly told the greatest of sages, unassailable in his ascetic power, about the arrival of Rāma: “Two sons of

Daśaratha are here, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. They have entered the ashram along with Rāma's wife, Sītā. The tamers of their foes have come to see you, sir, in order to offer obedient service. Please direct me as to what I should do next."

[9–11] When he learned from his disciple that Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and illustrious Vaidehī had come, he spoke these words: "How fortunate that now at long last Rāma has come to see me. I myself had been hoping with all my heart that he might come. You must go and welcome Rāma, his wife, and Lakṣmaṇa and show them into my presence. Why has he not been shown in yet?"

[12–15] Thus addressed by the great sage, a knower of righteousness, his disciple did obeisance to him and, his hands still cupped in reverence, replied with the words, "So be it." Then, in a flurry of agitation, the disciple hurried out and said to Lakṣmaṇa, "Where is Rāma? He himself may enter and go to see the sage." Lakṣmaṇa then went to the ashram along with the disciple and directed him to Kākutstha and Sītā, the daughter of Janaka. [f]The disciple, speaking deferentially in consequence of Agastya's words, showed him in as custom demanded and with the cordial welcome he deserved.

[16–20] Entering with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma cast his gaze around the ashram, at the tame deer that wandered about, at the shrines of Brahmā, Agni, Viṣṇu, great Indra, Vivasvant, Soma, Bhaga, Kubera, Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ, and Vāyu. Then the sage sprang up from where he sat encircled by his students, and Rāma watched him advancing at the head of the sages, ablaze with power. The mighty prince then turned to Lakṣmaṇa, bringer of glory, and said: "Here, he is coming out, Lakṣmaṇa, the holy seer Agastya. I can tell by his noble bearing that he must be that treasure-store of asceticism."

[21–25] Having spoken in this way about Agastya, who was as radiant as the sun, the great-armed prince and scorcher of his foes, in deep joy, clasped the feet of the sage. Then, after doing obeisance to him, righteous Rāma stood with his hands cupped in reverence, and with him stood Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā Vaidehī. Once the sage had received Kākutstha and honored him with a place to sit and water for his feet, he asked after his health and bade him be seated. He poured an oblation into the fire, presented the guest-offering, and paid homage to his guest; then he gave them food in

accordance with the ways of forest hermits. When the bull among sages, wise in the ways of righteousness, finally seated himself, he addressed righteous Rāma, who sat with his hands cupped in reverence, and said:

[26–29] “To be sure, Kākutstha, an ascetic who mistreats a guest is destined to feed on his own flesh in the other world like a man who bears false witness. And you who are now my dear guest are king of all the world, a great chariot-warrior, a man held in reverence and esteem, who keeps to the ways of righteousness.” And when he had spoken in this fashion, he paid reverence to Rāghava with fruits and roots, flowers and other such things, to his heart’s content, and then addressed him further with these words: “Here is a great and heavenly bow, tiger among men, inlaid with gold and diamonds. It was fashioned by Viśvakarman and belongs to Viṣṇu.

[30–34] “And this supreme arrow that gleams like the sun and never misses its mark was given by Brahmā to great Indra, who gave it to me along with this pair of quivers that never run out of arrows. They are filled with razor-sharp arrows glowing like purifying fires. And here is a sword inlaid with gold, with a scabbard of pure gold. It was with this bow, Rāma, that long ago Viṣṇu slew the great *asuras* in battle and recovered the radiant royal splendor of the gods, the denizens of heaven. Bestower of honor, for the sake of victory please accept this bow, this pair of quivers, this arrow, and this sword, just as Indra, wielder of the *vajra*, once received that *vajra*.” Then, after having spoken in this fashion, the mighty and blessed Agastya presented all of that splendid weaponry to Rāma. Then he spoke once more.

Sarga 12

[1–5] “My blessings upon on you, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. I am pleased and gratified that you have come with Sītā to do obeisance to me. You must be fatigued by your wearying journey, terribly wearied. It is evident that Maithilī, daughter of Janaka, is most disconsolate. For she is very delicate, and never before has sorrow heaped its scorn upon her. But driven by affection for her husband, she has come to the forest, where difficulties abound. You must do all you can to ensure Sītā’s comfort here, Rāma, since in following you into the forest she has done a most difficult thing. For from the hour of their creation, delight of the Raghus, such has been the nature of women: to love their man when things go smoothly, and when things get hard, to leave him.

[6–11] “Indeed, women are as unpredictable as lightning, as sharp as swords, and as quick to fly away as Garuḍa or the wind. But this wife of yours is free from all these faults. She is as worthy of praise and esteem as is the lady Arundhatī. You will be an ornament to this region, Rāma, tamer of your foes, should you make your dwelling here with Saumitri and Sītā.” Addressed in this way by the sage, Rāghava, his hands cupped in reverence, replied deferentially to the seer, who blazed with the brilliance of fire: “How fortunate I am, how favored, that I, my brother, and my wife have virtues enough to please the great sage and granter of boons. But can you please direct me to some well-watered and abundantly forested region where I can establish my own ashram and live in comfort and happiness?”

[12–15] Then, having listened to what Rāma had said and reflecting a moment, the righteous and wise Agastya, foremost of sages, spoke these exceedingly wise words: “Two leagues from here, my son, is a majestic region known as Pañcavaṭī, abounding in roots and fruits, water and animals. You should go and establish your ashram there with Saumitri; you can enjoy yourself even as you are adhering strictly to your father’s order. For I have come to know all that has befallen you, faultless prince, by means of my ascetic powers and in consequence of my affection for Daśaratha.

[16–22] “And by these very same powers I have also discovered your heart’s true desire despite your having promised to live with me here in this forest of austerities. And that is why I am telling you to go to Pañcavaṭī. It is a lovely forested region, and Maithilī will be comfortable there. The region has everything to recommend it, Rāghava; it is not too far from here, and the Godāvarī River is close by as well. Maithilī will be comfortable there. It is a secluded, holy, and lovely place, great-armed prince, rich in fruits and roots, and all different kinds of birds come flocking there. Although accompanied by a wife, sir, you are capable of protecting her. Then, too, Rāma, while living there you can safeguard the ascetics. Yonder, mighty prince, one can just make out a large grove of *madhūka* trees. You must head north of it, toward the banyan. There, upon a rise of ground not far from a mountain range, is the region known as Pañcavaṭī, where the woodlands are always in flower.”

[23–25] After Agastya had spoken to him in this way, Rāma together with Saumitri honored the truthful seer and begged leave of him. And when

the two of them had been given leave and had fallen at his feet and done obeisance, they and Sītā left his ashram for Pañcavaṭī. Taking up their bows and strapping on their quivers, the princes, fearless in battle, resolutely proceeded to Pañcavaṭī along the path by which the great seer had directed them.

Sarga 13

[1–4] As the delight of the Raghus was traveling to Pañcavaṭī, he encountered on the way a huge vulture of awesome valor. Seeing that bird in the forest, the illustrious Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa took him for a *rākṣasa* and demanded, “Who are you, sir?” Then, in a sweet and kindly voice that immediately won them over, he replied, “My child, you must know that I was your father’s friend.” On learning of his acquaintance with his father, Rāghava paid him homage and then intently inquired of his name and lineage.

[5–9] When he heard Rāma’s words, the bird proceeded to tell of himself and his lineage, starting with the origin of all creatures, saying: “Hear me, great-armed Rāghava, as I name from the very beginning all the Prajāpatis, lords of creatures, who lived in ancient times. The first of them was Kardama, after whom came Vikṛta, then Śeṣa, Śaṃśraya, and mighty Bahuputra. Then came Sthāṇu and Marīci, Atri and powerful Kratu, Pulastya, Añgiras, Pracetas, and Pulaha. Then there was Dakṣa and after him Vivasvant, then Ariṣṭanemi and mighty Kaśyapa, who was the last of them, Rāghava.

[10–18] “Now, the Prajāpati named Dakṣa, so we have heard, glorious Rāma, had sixty daughters, all endowed with glory. From their number Kaśyapa married eight of the loveliest: Aditi and Diti, Danū and Kālakā, Tāmrā and Krodhavaśā, Manu and Analā. And joyfully Kaśyapa then addressed the maidens, ‘Bear sons who are my equal, to be masters of the three worlds.’ Aditi was willing, great-armed Rāma, and so were Diti, Danū, and Kālakā, but the others were not. Of Aditi were born the thirty-three gods, tamers of their foes: the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, and Aśvins, slayers of their enemies. Diti bore glorious sons called the Daityas, my son. Long ago this treasure-laden earth and all the seas and forests belonged to them. Danū bore a son named Aśvagrīva, O tamer of your foes, while Kālakā bore Naraka and Kālaka. Krauñcī, Bhāsī, Śyenī, Dhṛtarāṣṭrī, and

Śukī were the five daughters Tāmrā bore, all of them famed throughout the world. Krauñcī gave birth to the owls, and Bhāsī to the kites.

[19–25] “Śyenī gave birth to the falcons and mighty vultures, Dhṛtarāṣṭrī bore all the *haṃsas* and the *kalahaṃsas*. And, bless you, that lovely woman bore the *cakravākas*, whereas Śukī bore Natā, whose daughter was Vinatā. Then too, Rāma, Krodhavaśā bore ten children, Mṛgī, Mṛgamandā, Harī, Bhadramadā, Mātañgī, Śārdulī, Śvetā, Surabhī, Surasā, who was endowed with all auspicious marks, and Kadrukā. The offspring of Mṛgī were all the deer, Rāma, foremost of kings; while those of Mṛgamandā were the apes, gaur, and yaks. Next, Bhadramadā bore a child named Irāvatī, whose son was the great world guardian, the elephant Airāvata. [g]The offspring of Harī were the tawny monkeys, the swift forest monkeys and langurs, whereas the sons Śārdulī bore were the tigers.

[26–30] “Bull among men, the offspring of Mātañgī were the elephants, and the son Śvetā bore was named Śvetākṣa, one of the guardian elephants of the directions. Then, bless you, Rāma, the goddess Surabhi bore two daughters, one named Rohiṇī, the other, illustrious Gandharvī. The children Rohiṇī bore were the cows, and Gandharvī’s were the horses. And, Rāma, Surasā bore the great serpents and Kadrū the snakes. To the great Kaśyapa, Manu bore men, bull among men, the brahmans, kshatriyas, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*. From her mouth were born the brahmans, from her breast the kshatriyas; from her thighs were born the *vaiśyas* and from her feet the *śūdras*, according to the holy *vedas*.

[3l–34] “And Analā brought forth all the holy fruit trees. Now, Vinatā was the granddaughter of Śukī, and Kadrū was Surasā’s sister. Kadrū bore the thousand great serpents that hold up the earth, while Vinatā had two sons, Garuḍa and Aruṇa. By this Aruṇa was I begotten, tamer of your foes, as was my elder brother Saṃpāti. Know me to be Jaṭāyus, whose mother was Śyenī. I will live with you, if you wish, and keep watch over Sītā whenever you and Lakṣmaṇa are away.”

[35–36] [h]Rāghava once more paid homage to Jaṭāyus, embraced him warmly, and bowed before him. For he had heard about Jaṭāyus’s friendship with his father, who had often spoken of it. And so, committing Sītā, princess of Mithilā, to the care of the immensely powerful bird, he went with him and Lakṣmaṇa to Pañcavaṭī, ready to consume his enemies as a flame consumes moths.

Sarga 14

[1–5] Upon reaching Pañcavaṭī, a place teeming with all kinds of wild animals, Rāma addressed his mighty brother Lakṣmaṇa: “We have come to the place to which the great seer directed us. This must be Pañcavaṭī, dear brother, the place where the woodlands are in flower. You must survey the woodlands all around. You are clever at such things. Which place would you recommend for our ashram? Look for a place with a source of water nearby, the sort of spot where Vaidehī, you, and I may be comfortable, Lakṣmaṇa: one where there are forests and water to delight us, where fuel and flowers, *kuśa* grass and fresh water are near at hand.”

[6–8] Thus instructed by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa cupped his hands in reverence and as Sītā looked on, he made this reply to Kākutstha: “I shall always be subject to your will, Kākutstha, should you live a hundred years. You need only tell me to build in the place you choose yourself.” The splendid prince was well pleased with Lakṣmaṇa’s words, and after some reflection, he chose a spot endowed with all the qualities he sought.

[9–15] Coming to the place he had chosen, Rāma took Saumitri’s hand in his and spoke to him as follows about building the ashram: “This is a splendid spot, level and lined with flowering trees. Here, dear brother, is where you should build us a proper ashram. Nearby I can see a lovely lotus pond adorned with lotuses radiant as the sun and charged with a fragrant scent. Over there is the lovely Godāvarī River lined with flowering trees, just as the purified Agastya had described it. It is neither too far nor too near, and it teems with *haṃsas*, *kāraṇḍavas*, and lovely *cakravākas*, and is thronged with herds of animals. One can see the grand, majestic mountains with many caves, thick with blooming trees, and echoing with the cries of peacocks. With veins of gold, silver, and copper threaded here and there, the mountains resemble elephants painted with a latticework of brilliant stripes.

[16–19] “And there are lovely trees on the mountains, *sālas*, *tālas*, *tamālas*, *kharjūras*, *panasas*, *āmrakas*, *nīvāras*, *timiśas*, and *puṃnāgas*, as well as thick groves of various other trees—mangoes, *aśokas*, *tilakas*, *campakas*, and *ketakas*, and flowers, vines, and shrubs; sandalwood trees too, and *syandanas*, *nīpas*, *panasas*, *lakucas*, *dhavas*, *aśvakarṇas*, *khadiras*, *śamīs*, *kiṃśukas*, and *pāṭalas*. It is a pure and holy spot teeming with birds and beasts, and here is where we will live, Saumitri, in the company of this bird.”

[20–23] And so, addressed in this fashion by Rāma, mighty Lakṣmaṇa, the slayer of enemy heroes, soon built an ashram for his brother. He built a leaf hut there, spacious and very lovely, with walls of clay and crossbeams fashioned of long bamboo, making it very sturdy. Majestic Lakṣmaṇa then went down to the Godāvarī River and, after bathing, returned bearing lotuses and fruits. After making an offering of flowers and, in accordance with precept, performing the rite to appease the spirits, he showed Rāma the ashram he had built. Rāghava together with Sītā inspected the pleasant ashram he had built and was greatly delighted by the leaf hut.

[24–29] Then, in deep delight, he drew Lakṣmaṇa into his arms, and embracing him tightly and affectionately, he said: "I am pleased with you, my lordly brother, this is a great work you have accomplished. But this embrace I now give you is all the compensation I can offer for it. You have shown yourself to be wise in thought, deed, and righteousness, Lakṣmaṇa. With such a son as you my righteous father has not truly passed away." Then, after Rāghava had spoken to Lakṣmaṇa in this way, the bringer of glory with full self-possession dwelt happily in that place so abundant with fruit. Constantly attended by Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, the righteous prince lived there for some time, like one of the immortal gods in heaven.

Sarga 15

[1–5] While the great Rāghava was living a happy life there, autumn passed and winter, his favorite season, arrived. Once, when night was brightening into dawn and the delight of the Raghus went down to the lovely Godāvarī River to bathe, his mighty brother Saumitri, humbly bearing the water pot and following behind with Sītā, addressed him with these words: "The season you love has come, beloved brother, the most beautiful ornament of the year. The world crackles with frost and the earth is bedecked with a garland of crops; water is uninviting, and instead fire, the bearer of oblations, is what appeals most.

[6–10] "Now is the time for pious men to worship the ancestral spirits and gods with offerings of first fruits, whereupon they are freed from sin. The countryfolk have all they desire; their cows give milk more richly than ever. And kings march forth on expeditions with hopes of conquest. The sun keeps steadfastly to the south, the region where Yama, the ender of all things, holds sway, and so the north has lost its ruddy glow, like a woman

without her auspicious forehead mark. The Himalayas, by nature a treasure-store of snow, now with the sun so far away are even deeper in snow and all the more deserve their name. One's skin is pleasantly warmed at noon, now the most pleasant time to stroll. Sunshine appeals on days like this, and shade and water lose their appeal.

[11–15] "Mornings are frosty now, powdered with snow, bitterly cold and windy; the sun is weak, and the wilderness seems empty. No longer can one sleep outdoors. Led by the Puṣya star, the nights pass cold and gray with snow and last far longer than their three watches. As for the moon, all its appeal has passed to the sun. Its disk is misty gray and its glow has vanished, like that of a mirror clouded over by breath. Mist has sullied the moonlight, and even when the moon is full, it does not shine so brightly. You mark it, but miss its beauty, as with Sītā when she is tanned by the sun. The west wind's touch is cold by nature, but doubly so now when it blows at dawn, shot through with snow.

[16–20] "Mist covers the fields with their stands of wheat and barley. How beautiful they look at sunrise, when the *sārasa* cranes and *krauñca* birds are calling there. How beautiful the golden rice plants look. Their heads, the color of *kharjūra* blossoms, are so heavy with grain that the stalks are gently bowed. With its rays drawing near in a cloak of snow and frost, the sun, even at its zenith, looks more like the moon. The morning sunshine is too weak even to be felt, but it grows pleasantly warm to the skin by noon. How beautifully it glows, a faint pale red upon the earth. How beautiful the floor of the forest appears, with the early morning sunlight playing upon it and the meadows slightly dampened by a fall of hoarfrost.

[21–25] "The forest tracts seem fast asleep, wrapped up in the darkness of hoarfrost, blanketed by the darkness of snow, with not a blossom open. And the sand on the riverbanks is wet with snow, the water thickly covered with mist, and only their cry reveals the presence of *sārasa* cranes. Because of the falling sleet, the faintness of the sun, bringer of light, and the cold, the water even on the mountaintops has the bitter taste of poison. The lotus ponds have lost their beauty. Their lotuses are ravaged by frost, their leaves aged and withered, their filaments and cups shriveled, their stalks all that remain. Tiger among men, at this time back in the city, righteous Bharata, lost in sorrow, must be practicing austerities in devotion to you.

[26–33] “He has given up the pride and pomp of kingship, its many and various luxuries, to be an ascetic who rigorously fasts and sleeps on the cold ground. And at this moment, he too is probably getting ready to bathe, going down to the Sarayū with his subjects, who constantly attend on him. But he is a delicate youth, who was raised in perfect comfort. How can he endure the cold, plunging into the Sarayū in the last watch of the night? He is lotus eyed, swarthy, regal, slim, and tall, wise in the ways of righteousness, truthful in speech, controlled by shame, and self-restrained. He is kind spoken and gentle, long armed, a tamer of his foes; he has given up every comfort, devoting himself heart and soul to his noble brother. Great Bharata, your brother, shall win a place in heaven by emulating your every act of asceticism in the forest. Bharata disproves the popular saying, ‘Men take after their mothers and not their fathers.’ How could our mother Kaikeyī, with a husband like Daśaratha and a son like virtuous Bharata, have ever turned out to be so cruelly intentioned?”

[34–36] But as righteous Lakṣmaṇa was speaking like this in his affection, Rāghava could not bear to hear such criticism of his mother, and he said: “You must never criticize our middle mother, dear brother. Continue instead to speak as you were of Bharata, the leader of the Ikṣvāku dynasty. But no, do not: for determined though I am to keep my vow and live in the forest, you would pain my heart, in my love for Bharata, and make me waver again like a child.”

[37–39] Lamenting in this fashion, he reached the Godāvarī River, where he bathed with his younger brother and Sītā. They then satisfied the ancestral spirits and deities with water-offerings, and afterward, in deep concentration, they intoned the hymn to the rising sun and the gods. After bathing, as Rāma stood in the company of Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, he resembled the blessed lord Rudra after his bath, attended by Nandi and the daughter of the king of the mountains.

Sarga 16

[1–5] After their bath, Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa left the bank of the Godāvarī for their ashram. Returning to the ashram, Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa performed the morning rites, and then they returned to the leaf hut. Great-armed Rāma, resembling the moon beside the sparkling star Citrā, then sat with Sītā before the leaf hut and began to converse with his

brother Lakṣmaṇa about various matters. And while Rāma was sitting there engrossed in conversation, a certain *rākṣasa* woman chanced to come that way. Her name was Śūrpaṇakhā and she was the sister of the ten-necked *rākṣasa*, Rāvaṇa. Coming upon Rāma, she stared at him who resembled one of the thirty gods.

[6–11] Rāma had long arms, the chest of a lion, eyes like lotus petals. Though delicate, he was very strong and bore all the signs of royalty. He was as dark as the blue lotus, as radiant as Kandarpa, the god of love, and the very image of Indra. When the *rākṣasa* woman saw him, she became infatuated with desire. Rāma was handsome, the *rākṣasa* woman was hideous, he was shapely and slim of waist, she misshapen and potbellied; his eyes were large, hers were beady, his hair was jet black, and hers the color of copper; he always said just the right thing and in a sweet voice, her words were sinister and her voice struck terror; he was young, attractive, and well mannered, she was ill mannered, repellent, an old hag. And yet, the god of love, who comes alive in our bodies, had taken possession of her, and so she said to Rāma: "Your hair is matted in the manner of ascetics, yet you have a wife with you and bear a bow and arrows. How is it you have come into this region, frequented by *rākṣasas*?"

[12–16] Questioned in this fashion by the *rākṣasa* woman Śūrpaṇakhā, the slayer of enemies in his open manner proceeded to tell her everything: "There was a king named Daśaratha, as courageous as one of the thirty gods. I am his eldest son, named Rāma, known to people far and wide. This is Lakṣmaṇa, my devoted younger brother, and this my wife, the princess of Videha, known as Sītā. I was compelled to come to live in the forest by the command of my mother and my father, the lord of men, and I wanted to do what is right, for doing right has always been my chief concern. But I should like to know about you. Tell me, who are you? To whom do you belong? For what purpose have you come here? Tell me truthfully."

[17–20] Hearing his words and consumed with passion, the *rākṣasa* woman replied: "Listen, then, Rāma, I shall tell you, and my words will be truthful. My name is Śūrpaṇakhā. I am a *rākṣasa* woman, who can take on any form at will, and I roam this wilderness all alone, striking terror into every living thing. The *rākṣasa* named Rāvaṇa, the lord of all *rākṣasas*, is my brother; so too is the immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa, who lies ever fast asleep. So is Vibhīṣaṇa, but he is righteous and does not behave like a

rākṣasa. My other brothers are Khara and Dūṣaṇa, famed for their might in battle.

[21–25] "But I am prepared to defy them all, Rāma, for I have never seen anyone like you. I approach you as I would a husband, with true love, best of men. Be my husband forevermore; what do you want with Sītā? She is ugly and misshapen and unworthy of you. I alone am suited to you. Look upon me as your wife. I will devour this misshapen slut, this hideous human female with her pinched waist, along with this brother of yours. And then, my beloved, you shall roam the Daṇḍakas with me, viewing all the different mountain peaks and forests." Thus addressed by the wild-eyed creature, Kākutstha burst out laughing but then went on to reply with his customary eloquence.

Sarga 17

[1–5] As Śūrpaṇakhā stood there bound tight in the snare of desire, Rāma smiled and, humoring her, replied in jest: "But I am already married, my lady, and I love my wife. And for women such as you, to have a rival wife is a source of bitter sorrow. But my younger brother here is of good character, handsome, powerful, majestic, and still unmarried. His name is Lakṣmaṇa. He has never had a woman before and is in need of a wife. He is young and handsome and will make a good husband, one suited to such beauty as yours. So you should accept my brother as your husband, large-eyed, shapely lady. With no rival wife, the two of you will be as inseparable as sunlight and Mount Meru."

[6–12] When the *rākṣasa* woman, wild with desire, was addressed in this way by Rāma, she promptly turned away from him and said to Lakṣmaṇa: "I shall make you a lovely wife, one befitting your beauty. And together we shall roam so pleasantly all through the Daṇḍakas." [i]Addressed in such a fashion by the *rākṣasa* woman Śūrpaṇakhā, Lakṣmaṇa, with his customary eloquence, made this fitting reply: "Why would you want to be my wife, lotuslike beauty? I am completely subject to the will of my noble brother; I am a slave, and she who is my wife must be a slave as well. Become instead the junior wife of my noble brother, large-eyed lady of unblemished beauty. He is prosperous, and with him your fortunes too will prosper and you will be happy. Soon enough he will turn away from this misshapen slut, this hideous old wife with her pinched waist, and give his love to you alone. For

what man with any sense would reject this singular beauty of yours, my fair and shapely lady, and bestow his affections on a mere human female?”

[13–20] [j]When Lakṣmaṇa had spoken to her in this fashion, the potbellied, hideous creature, unused to teasing, thought he was in earnest. Then as Rāma, the invincible slayer of his enemies, sat with Sītā before the leaf hut, the *rākṣasa* woman addressed him once more, infatuated with desire: “It is on account of this misshapen slut, this hideous old wife with her pinched waist, that you care so little for me. So I am going to devour this human female at once, before your very eyes; then, free of any rival, I shall live happily with you.” And so saying, she flew into a rage, and with eyes flashing like firebrands she rushed toward the fawn-eyed princess, like a huge comet hurtling toward the star Rohiṇī. But as she was rushing toward Sītā, like the very noose of Mṛtyu, Death, mighty Rāma angrily restrained her and said to Lakṣmaṇa: “One should never tease these savage, ignoble creatures, Saumitri. Just look at Vaidehī, dear brother; she is frightened half to death. Now, tiger among men, you must mutilate this misshapen slut, this potbellied, lustful *rākṣasa* woman.”

[21–26] Addressed by Rāma in this fashion, powerful Lakṣmaṇa, in full view of his brother, drew his sword and in a rage cut off the creature’s ears and nose as Rāma looked on. The terrifying Śūrpaṇakhā, her ears and nose hacked off, gave out an earsplitting roar as she fled back into the forest the way she had come. Mutilated, spattered with blood, and now even more terrifying, the *rākṣasa* woman roared incessantly, like a storm cloud when the rains come. Gushing blood copiously, a terror to behold, she disappeared into the deep forest, howling, her arms outstretched. Then she made her way to her brother Khara, of fearsome blazing energy, who was in Janasthāna surrounded by a host of *rākṣasas*. Mutilated, she fell to the ground before him, like a bolt of lightning from the sky. And then, spattered with blood and wild with fear and confusion, Khara’s sister told him the whole story—how Rāma had come into the forest with his wife and Lakṣmaṇa, and how she herself had come to be mutilated.

Sarga 18

[1–5] At the sight of his sister fallen before him, mutilated and spattered with blood, the *rākṣasa* Khara was consumed with rage and began to question her: “You possess great power and daring, you go your own way

like Yama, the ender of all things, himself, going where you please and taking on any form you please. Who has brought you to this state? Which one of the gods, *gandharvas*, spirits, or great seers could it have been? Who was the mighty creature that mutilated you? For I know of no one in the world who would dare offend me, unless it be the thousand-eyed god, great Indra, the chastiser of Pāka. Today I will take that person's life with my deadly arrows, like the *sārasa* crane that drinks the milk and yet leaves the water mixed with it.

[6–9] "Who must I kill in combat, ripping into his vitals with my arrows? Whose bright-red foaming blood shall the earth drink? From whose corpse shall the swarming carrion birds tear the flesh—gorging on it in delight—once I have slain him in battle? Not even the gods, *gandharvas*, the *piśācas* and *rākṣasas* will be able to save that wretch once he is drawn into deadly battle with me. When you have gradually come to your senses, you must tell me the name of that savage creature who attacked and overwhelmed you in the forest."

[10–16] When she heard what her brother had said in his rage, Śūrpaṇakhā tearfully replied: "Two handsome young men have arrived, delicate yet powerful; their eyes are as large as lotus petals, and they are wearing barkcloth and black antelope hides. They are the image of the king of the *gandharvas* and bear all the signs of royalty. Whether they be gods or men I cannot tell for certain. And with them I saw a young woman, beautiful and fair waisted, and all adorned with jewelry. It was those two together, all on account of that woman, who brought me to this state like some defenseless slut. And now, dear brother, grant me this, my fondest wish: that I shall drink her blood and theirs after the battle."

[17–21] When she finished speaking, Khara, in a rage, gave these orders to fourteen powerful *rākṣasas*, the likes of Yama, the ender of all things, himself: "Two men bearing arms, wearing barkcloth and black antelope hides, have entered the fearsome Daṇḍaka forest in the company of a woman. You are to kill the two of them and that slut, and then return. My sister here shall drink their blood. This is my sister's most deeply cherished wish. You must go at once, *rākṣasas*, and fulfill it, crushing the two of them with your own blazing energy." Thus commanded, the fourteen *rākṣasas* set forth with her, like clouds driven before the wind.

Sarga 19

[1–5] Then, when the terrifying Śūrpaṇakhā reached Rāghava's ashram, she pointed out the two brothers and Sītā to the *rākṣasas*. They saw powerful Rāma seated before the leaf hut with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, princess of Videha. Spotting them and the *rākṣasa* woman who had returned, majestic Rāma Rāghava said to his splendid brother Lakṣmaṇa of blazing energy: "Stand next to Sītā for a moment, Saumitri, while I slay these creatures here that have followed in the train of this *rākṣasa* woman." Then, having heard those words of the celebrated Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa acknowledged them with the words, "So be it."

[6–10] Righteous Rāghava then strung his great bow inlaid with gold and addressed the *rākṣasas*: "We are two sons of Daśaratha, the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Together with Sītā we have entered the trackless Daṇḍaka forest. We are self-controlled ascetics who subsist on fruits and roots and follow the ways of righteousness as we live in the Daṇḍaka forest. Why do you threaten us with violence? You are the evil creatures that have wrought havoc in the great forest. And now, at the injunction of the seers, I have come, bow in hand, to kill you. [k]So be pleased to stay right where you are, wicked creatures, come no closer. And if you value your lives at all withdraw completely, night-roaming *rākṣasas*."

[11–15] The fourteen *rākṣasas*, brahman-killers all, lances in hand, were enraged when they heard his words. With eyes blazing bright red with rage, the dreaded creatures made a harsh reply to Rāma, the soft-spoken prince, the corners of whose eyes were red as well, and, unacquainted as they were with his prowess, they were delighted. They replied: "It is you who, having provoked the anger of our master, the great Khara, will lose your life today, slain by us in battle. For what power have you, alone, to even stand before us—who are many—in the forefront of battle, much less fight in combat? These iron clubs, lances, and spears wielded by our arms shall rob you of the bow clutched in your hand and rob you of strength and life."

[16–20] Then, when they heard this, the fourteen *rākṣasas*, brandishing their swords and weapons, furiously attacked the invincible Rāma Rāghava, hurling their lances at him. But Kākutstha splintered all these fourteen lances at once with as many arrows adorned with gold. Then, in a towering rage, the mighty prince grasped fourteen iron arrows sharpened on a whetstone and brilliant as sunlight. Holding them in his grasp, Rāghava

drew his bow, and, making the *rākṣasas* his targets, he loosed those arrows just as Indra of the hundred sacrifices does his *vajras*. They were gold feathered and razor sharp, adorned with gleaming gold, and they shed light like huge comets as they flew through the sky.

[21–25] The arrows forcefully pierced the chests of the *rākṣasas*, then emerged dripping with blood and sank into the ground with the crash of thunderbolts. Pierced to the heart, their bodies mutilated and drenched with blood, the *rākṣasas* fell to the ground like uprooted trees, and the breath of life left them. Seeing them fall to the ground, the *rākṣasa* woman, terrified, beside herself with rage, again let out a ghastly shriek. Howling shrilly, Śūrpaṇakhā sped off and again made her way to Khara. With the blood scarcely dry on her she fell before him in agony, as a broken vine might fall, its sap oozing out. Having seen the *rākṣasas* felled in battle, Khara's sister Śūrpaṇakhā ran off and told him all that had happened, how the *rākṣasas* had been slain, every last one.

Sarga 20

[1–5] Thus, to Khara's ill fortune, Śūrpaṇakhā returned, and at the sight of her collapsed before him in a rage, he addressed her in a clear and steady voice: "Why are you still weeping when just now I issued orders on your behalf to the heroic, blood-drinking *rākṣasas*? They are loyal and devoted to me and have always served my interests. They kill but cannot themselves be killed, nor would they ever fail to do my bidding. What is this, then? I want to know why you are still wailing 'Oh my protector!' and writhing like a snake upon the ground. Why are you lamenting like someone without a protector when I am standing here as your protector? Get up, get up, do not be afraid. Here now, you must abandon this faintheartedness."

[6–10] Addressed in this soothing manner by Khara, the unassailable *rākṣasa* woman wiped her tearful eyes and answered her brother: "All of the fourteen heroic and dreaded *rākṣasas* you sent on my behalf to kill Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa—merciless though they were, and armed with lances and spears—have been killed in battle by Rāma with arrows that pierced them to the quick. When I saw that great deed of Rāma's, how those powerful *rākṣasas* dropped instantly to the ground, I was seized with great terror. In fear, alarm, and desperation, I have again taken refuge with you, night-roaming *rākṣasa*. For I see danger everywhere I look.

[11–14] “I am drowning in a vast ocean of grief with despair for its sea monsters and terror for its garland of waves. Can you not save me? All those *rākṣasas*, eaters of raw flesh, who came to my aid now lie dead on the ground, slain by Rāma’s sharp arrows. If you are at all moved to compassion for me or those *rākṣasas*, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, if you are daring and mighty enough to fight Rāma, then pluck out this thorn in the side of the *rākṣasas*, who has made the Daṇḍaka forest his home. If you will not slay my enemy Rāma today, then I shall not hesitate to take my own life right before your very eyes.

[15–18] “I really think you do not dare to stand face to face with Rāma in combat when he is armed for battle with his bow. For if you cannot kill those mere humans, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, then I believe that you simply imagine yourself as a hero, and are one who falsely assumes the air of valor. So you had better hurry up and leave Janasthāna along with your kinsmen. For this is no place to live for one with little strength and less courage. Otherwise, overwhelmed by Rāma’s blazing energy, you shall instantly perish. For Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, is endowed with blazing energy; and his brother, the one who mutilated me, is immensely powerful as well.”

Sarga 21

[1–5] Belittled in this way by Śūrpaṇakhā, the heroic Khara replied with these extremely harsh words in the midst of the *rākṣasas*: “The contempt shown you fills me with an unparalleled rage that is as impossible to hold back as the great salt sea when it surges. I care nothing for the power of Rāma, that short-lived mortal. Because of those evil acts of his, he, once struck down, is about to lose his life. So stop your tears, do not be distraught. For I intend to send Rāma and his brother to the abode of Yama. And as Rāma lies upon the ground, cut down by my battle-axe, his life ebbing away, you, *rākṣasa* woman, shall drink his hot, red blood.”

[6–12] She was delighted to hear the words issuing from Khara’s mouth, and then, in her foolishness, she began once more to praise her brother as the best of *rākṣasas*. First abused and then praised by her, Khara addressed his general Dūṣaṇa: “Here are fourteen thousand dreaded *rākṣasas* who bow to my will and never turn back from battle. Blue-black as storm clouds, awesome in their onslaught and savage in their deeds, they are endowed with power and dreadful might, and take pleasure in acts of violence against

the world. Their mouths are huge, their strength is great, their pride like that of the tiger. Dear friend, you must assemble these proud *rākṣasas*, every last one. Make ready my chariot at once, dear friend, my bows and brilliant arrows, my swords and various sharp javelins. For, skilled in combat, I intend to march out at the head of the great descendants of Pulastya and use all my battle skills to slay that savage Rāma."

[13–16] And as he was speaking in this fashion, Dūṣaṇa brought before him his great sun-hued chariot harnessed with purebred, dappled horses. Then, filled with rage, Khara mounted his chariot. Ornamented with burnished gold, with golden wheels and yoke poles of cat's-eye beryl, it resembled the peak of Mount Meru. It was spacious and decorated with auspicious, gilt designs of fish and flowers, trees and rocks, flocks of birds, the sun and moon and stars. It was furnished with a battle standard and swords, adorned with bells, and harnessed to purebred horses.

[17–22] Observing him mounted on his chariot, the *rākṣasas* of fearsome valor took up their positions around him and the powerful Dūṣaṇa. And when Khara saw all the great *rākṣasa* bowmen with their terrible shields, arms, and battle standards, he cried out to them from his chariot, "Onward!" Then, with their terrible shields, arms, and battle standards, the *rākṣasa* army set forth at lightning speed and with a deafening roar from Janasthāna. The fourteen thousand dreaded *rākṣasas* marched forth from Janasthāna, obedient to the will of Khara and armed with war hammers, spears, lances, and keen battle-axes, with swords, hand-held discuses, and gleaming iron cudgels, with javelins and terrible iron clubs and massive bows, with maces, swords, cudgels, and *vajras* held high, fearsome to behold.

[23–26] Khara watched as the *rākṣasas* of fearsome valor went racing ahead, and a moment afterward his own chariot set forth as well. His charioteer, reading Khara's thoughts, urged on the dappled horses all ornamented with burnished gold. And as the chariot of Khara, destroyer of his enemies, was being driven swiftly forward, it gave out a noise that extended to every quarter of heaven and to all points in between. And thus, in a towering rage, harshly clamoring, Khara hastened onward like Yama, the ender of all things, to slay his enemy, and time and again he urged on his charioteer, roaring like a swollen storm cloud bursting with a shower of hailstones.

Sarga 22

[1–5] As that terrifying army set forth, a rumbling storm cloud, as reddish brown as a donkey, ominously showered down water red as blood. The swift horses harnessed to Khara's chariot unaccountably stumbled on a flat, flower-strewn stretch of the royal highway. A dark, blood-rimmed disk, like the ring of a twirling firebrand, began to cover the sun, maker of day. Then a huge and fearsome vulture flew near and, after hovering over it, perched upon his battle standard high atop its tall, golden shaft. In the environs of Janasthāna, flesh-eating birds and beasts circled and sent up their different raucous cries, harshly clamoring.

[6–10] In a dimly sunlit quarter, fearsome jackals raised loud, ghastly howls, boding ill for the *yātudhānas*. Terrifying clouds resembling crumbled mountains and pouring down blood-red water filled up the sky completely so that there were no gaps between them. A dreadful pall of darkness descended so densely that it obscured all the cardinal and intermediate directions. Twilight, as red as fresh blood, came on before its time, and fearsome birds and beasts turned toward Khara and began to screech. Jackals, dreadful to behold, those unfailingly ominous portents in battle, turned toward the army and began to scream, spitting flames.

[11–15] A headless corpse resembling an iron club appeared near the sun, bringer of light. And Svarbhānu, the demon of the eclipse, engulfed the sun before his appointed time. The wind blew fiercely, the sun, maker of day, went dark, and though it was not yet nighttime the stars came out, shining like fireflies. Birds and fish went into hiding, lotuses withered in the ponds, and in an instant trees were stripped of their fruits and flowers. Cloud-gray dust swirled up even with no breeze blowing, and *sārika* birds began crying, "*vīcīkūcī*!" Meteors, dreadful to behold, came crashing down, and a tremor passed through the earth, mountains, forests, and groves.

[16–20] Wise Khara bellowed from his chariot. His left arm throbbed and his voice caught in his throat. As he gazed about, tears came to his eyes, and a sharp pain pierced his forehead. But in his delusion, he would not turn back. Then, as he watched these hair-raising omens appear, Khara laughed and addressed the *rākṣasas* with these words: "These are all great omens and terrible to see, but why should I in my power give them any thought, any more than the strong man gives the weak? With my keen

arrows I could bring down even the stars from heaven, and in my rage I could throw the fear of death into Mṛtyu, the god of death himself.

[21–24] “Rāghava is arrogant in his power, and so is his brother Lakṣmaṇa, and I will not return until I have slain them with my sharp arrows. My sister shall have her heart’s desire and drink their blood. Because of what they did to her, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are doomed. Never before have I met defeat in combat. You can all bear witness to this. I am not telling a lie. Should the king of the gods himself come on his rutting elephant Airāvata and attack with his *vajra* in hand, in my rage I could kill him in battle. What then of two mere humans?”

[25–29] His vast army listened to the *rākṣasa*’s bellowing, and ensnared as they were in the noose of Mṛtyu, it gave them unequaled delight. All the great seers, gods, and *gandharvas*, the perfected beings and celestial bards assembled, eager to watch the battle. And having gathered all together, those blessed ones said to one another: “May cows and brahmans fare well, and all whom the worlds hold in esteem! May Rāghava conquer the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, the descendants of Pulastya, in battle just as once Viṣṇu, discus in hand, conquered in battle all the bulls among the *asuras*.” Uttering these and many similar remarks, the supreme seers watched the army of *rākṣasas*, whose lives were soon to end.

[30–34] Meanwhile, aboard his chariot Khara swiftly sallied forth from the vanguard of the army, and, seeing this, other *rākṣasas* sallied forth as well. Śyenagāmin, Pṛthugrīva, Yajñaśatru, Vihaṃgama, Durjaya, Karavīrākṣa, Paruṣa, Kālakārmuka, Meghamālin, Mahāmālin, Sarpāsya, Rudhirāśana—these twelve mighty warriors marched forward flanking Khara. Also from the vanguard, the four generals, Mahākapāla, Sthūlākṣa, Pramāthin, and Triśiras, followed Dūṣaṇa at the rear. With terrifying speed, lusting for battle, the ferocious army of *rākṣasa* warriors advanced against the two princes, like a string of eclipsing planets approaching the sun and moon.

Sarga 23

[1–5] While Khara, harsh in his valor, was making his way to the ashram, Rāma and his brother saw the very same omens. The appearance of those dreadful omens, boding ill for all creatures, was enough to horrify anyone. At the sight of them, Rāma addressed Lakṣmaṇa with these words: “Look at

those great portents of mass destruction, great-armed brother, how they appear to foretell the annihilation of all the *rākṣasas*. There in the sky, ragged and as reddish brown as a donkey, clouds are swirling, raining blood and rumbling harshly. My arrows are emitting smoke in eager anticipation of battle, Lakṣmaṇa, and my gold-backed bows are writhing.

[6–12] "Forest birds are screeching nearby, the sort that lead me to believe we may soon find ourselves in danger and our very lives in jeopardy. There will no doubt be a great clash of arms. The constant throbbing of my arm tells me so. But your face looks bright and clear, my heroic brother. This means victory is at hand for us, and defeat for our enemy. For when the face of a man preparing for battle darkens over, Lakṣmaṇa, it means his life is nearing its end. Still, for his own good, a wise man should take steps against any trouble he foresees before it arrives. Therefore, you must take Vaidehī and, with your arrows in hand and bearing your bow, seek refuge in a mountain cave, one overgrown with trees and hard to penetrate. I do not want you to question this command of mine. You must swear by these, my feet to which you bow. Now go, dear boy, without delay."

[13–15] Thus addressed by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa took up his bow and arrows and sought refuge with Sītā in an inaccessible cave. Once Lakṣmaṇa had entered the cave with Sītā, Rāma said to himself, "Good, it is all arranged," and he then donned his armor. Adorned in his fiery armor, Rāma resembled a smokeless flame flaring up in the dark.

[16–21] Taking up his arrows and brandishing his great bow, the mighty prince took up his position there, filling the quarters of heaven with the sound of his twanging bowstring. Then the gods and *gandharvas*, the perfected beings, celestial bards, and *guhyakas* turned to one another in utter terror and said: "Here are fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* of fearsome deeds, while righteous Rāma is all alone. How can this be a battle?" Just then, with a deep rumbling sound, the army of the *yātudhānas* appeared on every side with their terrifying armor, weapons, and battle standards. They let out roars like lions, shouted at one another, and twanged their bows; without letup they stormed about, raising a wild clamor and beating their war drums, so that the tumultuous noise filled all the forest.

[22–27] The noise terrified the animals that ranged the forest, and without a backward glance they ran off to where it was quiet. Deep as the

ocean, bristling with weapons of every sort, the army then advanced against Rāma. Expert as he was in combat, Rāma took in the scene with a glance, scanning Khara's army as it came on ready for battle. He strung his awesome bow, drew arrows from his quiver, and filled himself with a violent fury so that he might slay all the *rākṣasas*. It was impossible even to look at him then, enraged as he was and blazing like the fire at the end of a cosmic era. The forest deities trembled to see him suffused with such blazing energy. Indeed, in his rage Rāma had the very look of the god Śiva, who wields the Pināka bow, when he was about to destroy the sacrifice of Dakṣa.

Sarga 24

[1–5] Approaching the ashram with his escort, Khara spied Rāma, destroyer of his enemies, standing there enraged, his bow held steady. At the sight of Rāma, he raised his own taut-strung, harshly twanging bow, and urged the charioteer to drive on toward him. At Khara's command the charioteer drove the horses to where great-armed Rāma stood alone, brandishing his bow. When they saw Khara advancing, all his ministers, night-roaming *rākṣasas*, formed ranks around him, bellowing loudly. Mounted on his chariot in the midst of those *yātudhānas*, Khara resembled Mars, the red planet, rising amid the stars.

[6–10] Then, in a rage, all the night-roaming *rākṣasas* began to pelt the fearsome bowman, invincible Rāma, with their various weapons. Consumed with fury, the *rākṣasas* struck at Rāma in combat with war hammers and lances, darts, swords, and battle-axes. Like mighty, roaring storm clouds, they attacked Rāma Kākutstha, eager to kill him in battle. Indeed, like massive clouds showering the king of the mountains with torrents of rain, the hordes of *rākṣasas* loosed hails of arrows upon Rāma. Surrounded by hordes of fearsome *rākṣasas*, Rāghava resembled Śiva, the great god, surrounded by his hordes of attendants on a moonless night.

[11–15] With his arrows Rāghava received the weapons loosed by the *yātudhānas* just as the ocean receives the rivers' floods. When those terrible weapons pierced his body, Rāma did not waver any more than a great mountain wavers beneath the blows of many flaming thunderbolts. Rāma Rāghava was wounded, his whole body smeared with blood, so that he looked like the sun, maker of day, when at twilight it is enveloped by

clouds. The gods, *gandharvas*, perfected beings, and great seers as well sank down in despair to see him all alone, encircled by so many thousands. But then Rāma flew into a rage, and bending his bow into an arc, he unleashed sharp arrows by the hundreds and thousands.

[16–19] Inescapable, unendurable, like the very noose of Kāla, god of death, were the straight-flying, heron-feathered arrows Rāma shot in battle as if for sport. And as if for sport Rāma loosed his arrows at the enemy soldiers, and, like the nooses fashioned by Kāla, they carried off the *rākṣasas*' lives. After piercing the bodies of the *rākṣasas*, those arrows, drenched in their blood, continued their flight through the sky, gleaming with the splendor of blazing fires. Innumerable deadly arrows flew from the arc of Rāma's bow, taking the lives of the *rākṣasas*.

[20–24] With his arrows Rāma shattered in battle their bows by the hundreds and thousands, shattered their lofty battle standards and armor, cut off their heads, their braceleted arms, and their legs firm and muscular as elephants' trunks. Pierced by both broad-headed and iron arrows as well as sharp-tipped barbed arrows, the night-roaming *rākṣasas* raised a fearsome cry of agony. There was no respite for the army from the moment Rāma began to ravage them—like fire might a dry forest—with his sharp arrows that pierced them to the vitals. In a towering rage, some of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, heroes of fearsome power, continued to hurl lances, swords, and battle-axes at Rāma. But great-armed Rāghava, warding off the weapons with his arrows in battle, decapitated them and took their lives.

[25–28] The surviving night-roaming *rākṣasas* ran in despair to Khara, seeking refuge from the arrows that ravaged them. Dūṣaṇa met them, rallied them all, and then attacked Kākutstha in a rage, like Yama, the ender of all things, attacking Rudra. Reinforced by Dūṣaṇa, those who had fled took courage, and armed with boulders and with *sāla* and *tāla* trees, they charged Rāma once again. It was amazing, the battle that once more broke out between Rāma and the *rākṣasas*, a tumultuous, immensely frightening and hair-raising battle.

Sarga 25

[1–6] With his keen arrows, righteous Rāghava received the intense, deadly hail of trees and boulders. And as he met that hail of weapons, Rāma narrowed his eyes like a bull and flew into a towering rage in order to slay

all the *rākṣasas*. Possessed with rage and as if blazing with energy, he spread his arrows in every direction over Dūṣaṇa and the army. Then the enraged lord of the army, Dūṣaṇa, despoiler of enemies, seized a hair-raising iron club that resembled a mountain peak. That iron club was encircled with hoops of gold, studded with sharp iron barbs, and smeared with the marrow of his foes. Its impact was like that of the *vajra* or a thunderbolt, and it was powerful enough to smash enemy citadels or to crush the army of the gods. Seizing this serpentlike iron club, the savage night-roaming *rākṣasa* Dūṣaṇa attacked Rāma in battle.

[7–11] But even as Dūṣaṇa rushed toward him, Rāghava cut off both his braceleted arms with two arrows. The massive iron club dropped from his severed hand and fell upon the battlefield, like the banner of Śakra falling from on high. And Dūṣaṇa, his arms strewn about him, fell to the ground like a spirited elephant, its tusks shattered. Seeing Dūṣaṇa fallen to the ground, slain in battle, all beings honored Kākutstha, crying, "Well done! Well done!" At this juncture, three soldiers of the vanguard, Mahākapāla, Sthūlākṣa, and powerful Pramāthin, flew into a rage and in a body attacked Rāma, bound as they were in the noose of Mṛtyu.

[12–18] The *rākṣasa* Mahākapāla took up a huge lance, Sthūlākṣa seized a spear, and Pramāthin a battle-axe. When they hurled themselves against Rāghava, he received them as if they were welcome guests, with his sharp, pointed arrows. The delight of the Raghus severed the head of Mahākapāla and, with a flood of countless arrows, crushed Pramāthin. And he so filled Sthūlākṣa's eyes with sharp arrows that he fell down dead upon the ground, like a lofty tree with many branches. Then mighty Rāma set about killing the remnants of the army with arrows that, ornamented with diamonds and gold, resembled purifying fires. His gold-feathered arrows, like smoky tongues of fire, the purifier, cut down the *rākṣasas* as lightning bolts fell massive trees. With one hundred barbed arrows Rāma killed a hundred *rākṣasas*, and with a thousand he killed a thousand of them on the field of battle.

[19–24] As the arrows sliced through their armor and ornaments and pierced and splintered their bows, the night-roaming *rākṣasas* fell to the earth besmeared with blood. Spattered with blood, their hair streaming wildly, they fell in combat, strewn upon the treasure-laden earth like *kuśa* grass upon a broad altar. The forest was filled with dead *rākṣasas* and made

muddy with their blood and torn flesh; in an instant it had become a place of utter terror, a vision of hell itself. Fighting all alone on foot, one man, Rāma, killed fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* of fearsome deeds. Of that huge mass of warriors, the only survivors were the great chariot-warrior Khara, the *rākṣasa* Triśiras, and, of course, Rāma himself, the crusher of his foes. Then, when Khara saw that his fearsome army had been slaughtered in that great battle by the immensely powerful Rāma, he drove toward Rāma on his huge chariot, like Indra brandishing his lightning bolt.

Sarga 26

[1–5] And as Khara drove toward Rāma, the lord of the *rākṣasa* army named Triśiras fell in with him and spoke these words: "Restrain your rashness, bold warrior. Command me and you shall see great-armed Rāma cut down in combat. I give you my solemn promise—I touch my weapon as proof—that I shall slay Rāma, whom all the *rākṣasas* should have slain. I shall be his death in battle—or he mine. Restrain your lust for battle and for a moment just be a witness. Either you will return to Janasthāna delighted that Rāma has been killed, or, if I am killed, you will meet Rāma yourself in combat."

[6–10] Persuaded by Triśiras, who was eager to die, Khara granted him permission with the words, "Go, then, and fight." And so the former set out toward Rāghava. On a shining chariot harnessed with swift horses three-headed Triśiras—a triple-peaked mountain he seemed—charged Rāma in battle. Like a storm cloud he let loose a vast torrent of arrows, and he let out a roar as loud as a war drum when its skin has been moistened with water. And when Rāghava spotted the *rākṣasa* Triśiras racing toward him, he received him with his bow, brandishing his keen arrows. Then a great and tumultuous battle took place between Rāma and Triśiras as they fought like a lion and an elephant, both immensely powerful.

[11–15] At last, after Triśiras struck his forehead with three arrows, Rāma was filled with fury and, tolerating no more, said in a passion: "Ha! So this is the power of the bold, heroic *rākṣasa*, who scratches me on the forehead with arrows soft as flowers. Now you must receive my arrows as they fly from my bowstring." Then, having spoken so passionately, in a rage, he sank fourteen arrows, like poisonous snakes, into the chest of Triśiras. Then, with four strong-jointed arrows, mighty Rāma cut down his

four swift horses. With eight arrows Rāma cut down the driver in the chariot box and with one more splintered its lofty battle standard.

[16–20] As Triśiras leapt from his stricken chariot, Rāma pierced his heart with arrows, and the night-roaming *rākṣasa* stood there, stunned. Then, in his boundless power the prince would tolerate no more and, taking three sharp arrows, sent them flying and violently severed the *rākṣasa*'s three heads. Gushing blood and tormented by Rāma's arrows, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* fell to the ground where but a moment before his own heads had fallen. The surviving *rākṣasas*, attendants of Khara, broke ranks and fled without stopping like deer frightened by a tiger. After watching them running away, Khara then angrily turned away and on his own raced toward Rāma, just as Rāhu, the demon of the eclipse, does the moon.

Sarga 27

[1–5] Having seen Dūṣaṇa killed in battle along with Triśiras and having witnessed Rāma's prowess, Khara himself was seized with terror. [1]He had seen the *rākṣasa* army, a great, irresistible force, destroyed by one man, Rāma; he had seen Dūṣaṇa and Triśiras killed. Observing with a sinking heart his force all but destroyed, the *rākṣasa* Khara attacked Rāma as once Namuci attacked Vāsava. Forcefully he drew his bow and shot his arrows at Rāma, blood-drinking iron arrows darting like raging, poisonous snakes. Mounted on his chariot, Khara repeatedly twanged his bowstring and displayed his missiles as well as his skillful use of the different maneuvers with arrows employed in combat.

[6–10] Catching sight of him, the great chariot-warrior Rāma drew his huge bow and with his arrows filled up every cardinal and intermediate direction. With his unendurable arrows, which gave off sparks like fires, he filled up every corner of the sky, as Parjanya, the god of rain, does with his downpours. In this way, because of the sharp arrows loosed by Khara and Rāma, the sky was so completely filled with arrows that there was no space between them. Covered by masses of arrows, the sun was blotted out as the two struggled together in their fury to slay each other. With both broad-headed and iron arrows as well as sharp-tipped barbed arrows, Khara struck Rāma in battle as one might a great elephant with goads.

[11–15] All creatures watched as the *rākṣasa* kept his position in the chariot, bow in hand, looking like Yama, the ender of all things, with his

noose in hand. Bold as a lion, Khara advanced with a lion's bold strides, but at the sight of him Rāma shuddered no more than a lion in the presence of a small deer. Mounted on his great sunlike chariot, Khara hurtled toward Rāma in battle like a moth nearing a flame. Displaying his agility, Khara shattered great Rāma's bow and arrow right at the grip. In his fury he took up seven more arrows like Śakra's lightning bolts, and there in battle sank them into Rāma's armor.

[16–20] Struck by the firm-jointed arrows unleashed by Khara, Rāma's armor fell to the ground from his body radiant as the sun. As arrows plunged into his every limb, Rāghava in his rage took on the look of a blazing, smokeless fire. To put an end to his foe, Rāma, destroyer of his enemies, then strung another bow, a great one that gave off a booming sound. This was the best of bows, the mighty bow of Viṣṇu that the great seer had bestowed on him, and brandishing it, he attacked Khara. Then Rāma, enraged in combat, took up strong-jointed arrows fletched with golden feathers and splintered Khara's battle standard.

[21–25] The gorgeous, golden battle standard fell to the ground in countless splinters, like the sun falling by order of the gods. Knowing the vital spots, Khara, enraged, took aim at his heart and wounded Rāma's body with four arrows, as if wounding an elephant with prods. Many arrows were sent flying from Khara's bow, and Rāma, his body drenched with blood from his wounds, was seized with a wild fury. The best of bowmen grasped his bow in the face of this supreme challenge and, supreme archer that he was, shot six arrows, all well aimed. He sank one arrow into Khara's head, two into his arms, and with three half-moon-headed arrows struck him in the chest.

[26–30] Enraged and eager to kill the *rākṣasa*, the mighty prince then shot thirteen iron arrows sharpened on a whetstone and brilliant as the sun, bringer of light. With one arrow, powerful Rāma demolished Khara's chariot yoke in combat; with four, his four horses; with the sixth, the head of his charioteer; with three more he demolished the main yoke pole, with two, the axle; with the twelfth, Khara's bow and arrows. And after wreaking this destruction in battle, Rāghava, the equal of Indra, laughed as he took up the thirteenth arrow like the *vajra* and pierced Khara. His bow shattered, his chariot lost, his horses and charioteer dead, Khara jumped to the ground, mace in hand, and took his stand. The gods and great seers then assembled

in their grand flying palaces, and with their hands cupped in reverence the whole assembly joyfully praised the feat of the great chariot-warrior Rāma.

Sarga 28

[1–5] When Khara, having lost his chariot, took his stand with his mace in hand, mighty Rāma addressed him—and if his tone of voice was mild, the words he used were harsh: "Standing at the head of a great force, a host of elephants, horses, and chariots, you have done utterly ruthless deeds that all the world finds repugnant. No one who is cruel, does evil deeds, and makes creatures tremble can long survive, not even the lord of the three worlds himself. For all unite to destroy one whose deeds are brutal and perverse, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, just as when a vicious snake comes among them. A person may give no thought to the evil he does from greed or lust, but, like a lizard that eats hailstones, he will surely see its end result—when he comes to grief.

[6–10] "What then must be the fruit you will reap, *rākṣasa*, for slaying the illustrious ascetics who live in the Daṇḍaka forest, following the ways of righteousness? Savage creatures who do evil and are held in repugnance by the world do not long retain their power, like trees cut off at the root. Inevitably in the course of time the agent harvests the bitter fruit of his evil act, just as trees come into flower with the passing of the seasons. Like eating poisoned food, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, evil deeds in due course bear their fruit in this very world. I come as king, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, to end the lives of evildoers and all who wish the world ill.

[11–14] "The arrows adorned with gold I unleash upon you shall rend your flesh, piercing you as snakes pierce an anthill. And once you have been slain in battle, you and your army shall soon follow the righteous men you devoured in the Daṇḍaka forest. The supreme seers you killed in the past shall now look down upon you, they in their flying palaces and you, slain by my arrows, in hell. Fight all you will, try as hard as you can, lowest of your kind. I will now strike off your head, which is like the fruit of the *tāla*."

[15–19] Addressed in this way by Rāma, Khara flew into a rage, his eyes blazing red. Laughing but blind with rage, he replied to Rāma: "How can you sing your own praises, son of Daśaratha, when you are so unpraiseworthy, simply on the strength of killing some common *rākṣasas* in

battle? The bold and powerful, those who are truly bulls among men, never speak of themselves in the pride of their own might. Only crude and common men, Rāma, regarded as the scum of the kshatriya order in the eyes of all the world, make such empty boasts as you have made. Would anyone who is truly brave in battle bring up his family and praise himself—and so inopportunely, when the hour of his death is at hand?

[20–24] "Your boasting has only shown how worthless you really are, like false gold smelted down in a grass fire. Can you not see me holding up my mace and standing before you as unshakable as a richly veined mountain that upholds the earth? With mace in hand like Yama, the ender of all things, with his noose in hand, I could easily take your life in battle, even all life in the three worlds. Granted, I have much to say to you. But I will say no more, lest the sun go down and our battle be suspended. By killing you now, I shall stop the tears for the fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* you have slain."

[25–28] Having said this, in a violent rage Khara hurled his mace at Rāma, a superbly banded mace that blazed like a lightning bolt. The mace shot forth in a blaze from Khara's hand, incinerating trees and shrubs as it flew onward. But even as the flaming mace came flying toward him, like the very noose of Mṛtyu, Rāma's arrows splintered it in midair. Shattered by the arrows, the mace fell to the ground like a serpent felled by the power of *mantras* and potent herbs.

Sarga 29

[1–5] After shattering Khara's mace with his arrows, Rāghava, who cherished righteousness, spoke to him in a passion but with a smile on his lips: "Is this all the power you can show me, lowest of *rākṣasas*? How inferior you are in strength to me, how hollow your boasting! Your mace lies here on the ground, shattered by my arrows, and with it any trust in your arrogant vaunting is likewise shattered. And when you said, 'I shall stop the tears for the slain *rākṣasas*,' those words were false as well. For I will take your life, *rākṣasa*, as Garutmant took the drink of immortality, you lowly wretch of evil deeds.

[6–12] "This very day the earth will drink your bubbling, foaming blood as you are ripped apart, your throat cut by my arrows. And then, covered with dust, you shall lay your arms limply upon the earth and sleep with her

in a close embrace, as if she were some hard-won woman. And once you lie in that deep slumber, you disgrace to the *rākṣasas*, this Daṇḍaka forest shall become a place of refuge for all in need of refuge. Once my arrows have made the Janasthāna your final resting place, *rākṣasa*, the sages will wander throughout the forest without fear. This very day the *rākṣasa* women who used to terrify others shall themselves flee in terror and utter desolation, their kinsmen dead, their faces bathed in tears. This very day, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, all of those women of that same race who have husbands such as you shall know the meaning of grief. You base-minded wretch of evil deeds, ever a thorn in the side of brahmans! Because of you, the sages have cast their oblations into the fire in terror."

[13–15] But as Rāghava was speaking so passionately in this way in the midst of battle, Khara replied out of anger, reviling him in the harshest tone: "It is only your brash arrogance that makes you so fearless in the very face of danger. You have lost all sense of what to say and not to say, because Mṛtyu has you in his power. For once the noose of Kāla is wound around a man's neck, he no longer knows what is or is not to be done, and all the six senses fail him."

[16–20] Having spoken to Rāma in this way, and knitting his brow into a frown, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* glanced around for a weapon to use in battle. He spotted a huge *sāla* tree not far away, and biting his lip, he tore the tree up by the roots. As he raised it in his arms, the powerful *rākṣasa* bellowed, and hurling it at Rāma he cried out, "You are slain!" But as the tree hurtled toward him, mighty Rāma splintered it with a torrent of arrows, and then he filled himself with a violent fury in order to kill Khara in battle. Breaking out in sweat, his eyes red with rage, Rāma pierced Khara in battle with thousands of arrows.

[21–25] His blood flowed in a foaming torrent from the wounds made by the arrows, like a stream cascading down Mount Prasravaṇa. Khara staggered from the arrows Rāma shot in combat, but then, intoxicated with the smell of his own blood, he swiftly charged at him. Drenched with blood, he threw himself upon him in a wild frenzy, but, practiced in arms, Rāma sidestepped him with one quick move. Then, in order to slay Khara in battle, Rāma took up an arrow that resembled fire, the purifier, or a second staff of Brahmā. It was the arrow given by the wise king of the gods, Indra the munificent.

[26–28] The righteous prince nocked it in order to loose it at Khara. Then, loosed by Rāma, who had taken up his bow, the great arrow, with a crash like a thunderbolt, struck Khara in the chest. Khara fell to the ground as the arrow's fire burned him up the way Andhaka once fell burned to ashes by Rudra in the White Forest. Struck by it, Khara fell like Vṛtra cut down by the *vajra*, Namuci by the foam of the sea, or Bala by Indra's thunderbolt.

[29–32] All the royal seers and supreme seers then assembled, and jubilantly lauding Rāma, they spoke these words: "It was to this end that the great and mighty Indra, the chastiser of Pāka and smasher of citadels, paid his visit to the holy ashram of Śarabhañga. The great seers thus contrived a means of bringing you to this place to slay these savage, evil *rākṣasas*. You have done what we required, son of Daśaratha, and now the great seers can safely follow the ways of righteousness in the Daṇḍakas."

[33–35] At that juncture, mighty Lakṣmaṇa, together with Sītā, having made his way out of the mountain fastness, happily entered the ashram. Then heroic Rāma, victorious and honored by the great seers, entered the ashram, being reverentially received by Lakṣmaṇa. And Vaidehī warmly embraced her husband, delighted to see that he had slain his enemies and brought peace to the great seers.

Sarga 30

[1–5] Now, when Śūrpaṇakhā saw how Rāma by himself had slain in battle the fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* of fearsome deeds, as well as Dūṣaṇa, Triśiras, and Khara, she once more let out a deafening roar like a storm cloud. When she saw the feat accomplished by Rāma, impossible for anyone else to do, she set out in terror for Lañkā, which was protected by Rāvaṇa. She found Rāvaṇa of brightly blazing energy on the terrace of his splendid palace, seated with his ministers like Vāsava with the Maruts. He was seated upon a golden throne radiant as the sun, and he looked like a purifying fire on a golden altar blazing with rich oblations.

[6–10] A hero invincible in combat with gods, *gandharvas*, spirits, or great seers, he looked like Yama, the ender of all things, with his jaws agape. He bore thunderbolt and *vajra* wounds received in clashes with gods and *asuras*, and his chest was marked with raised scars from the tips of Airāvata's tusks. He had twenty arms and ten necks. His regalia was

exquisite. A broad-chested hero, he was marked with all the marks of royalty. He sparkled with earrings of burnished gold and the glossy beryl he wore. His arms were handsome, his teeth bright white, his mouth was huge, and he was as tall as a mountain. In combat with gods his body had been wounded in hundreds of places by blows from Viṣṇu's discus and all the other weapons of the gods.

[11–15] He could swiftly agitate the imperturbable oceans, throw down mountaintops, and crush the gods. A breaker of laws and a violator of other men's wives, he constantly used all the divine weapon-spells to obstruct sacrifices. It was he who had gone to the city of Bhogavatī, defeated Vāsuki and Takṣaka, and abducted Takṣaka's wife. It was he who had gone to Mount Kailāsa and conquered the man-borne Kubera, stealing his flying palace Puṣpaka, which flies wherever one desires. It was he who in a mighty rage would destroy the gardens of the gods, the heavenly forest Caitraratha with its lotus pond, and the Nandana forest.

[16–22] It was he who, tall as a mountain peak, would extend his arms to prevent those eminent scorchers of their foes, the sun and moon, from rising. It was that resolute one who long ago in the great forest had practiced austerities for ten thousand years and unflinchingly cut off his own heads as offerings to the self-existent Brahmā. It was he who had no longer to fear death in combat with any beings—gods, *dānavas*, *gandharvas*, *piśācas*, great birds, or serpents—any beings but men. It was that immensely powerful one who would pollute the holy *soma* at the sites of the oblation, when in the course of their rites the twice-born brahmans consecrated it with vedic *mantras*. He would disrupt their sacrifices at their climax, then murder the brahmans. He was savage and wicked, cruel and ruthless, delighting in the misfortune of others. He was Rāvaṇa, the terror of all the worlds. The *rākṣasa* woman beheld her savage and powerful brother, clad in heavenly garments and jewels, adorned with heavenly garlands, the illustrious lord of *rākṣasas*, delight of the House of the Paulastyas. Śūrpaṇakhā, who once lived free from fear but was now beside herself with fear and confusion, told him the terrifying story of how the great prince had mutilated her. As she showed herself, his eyes grew wide and blazed.

Sarga 31

[1–5] As Rāvaṇa, who makes the worlds cry out, sat among his ministers, Śūrpaṇakhā in her rage and desolation addressed him with these harsh words: "Absorbed as you are in sensual pleasures, so licentious and unbridled, you overlook the one thing you must not, the presence of terrible danger. When a lord of the earth is lustful, addicted to vulgar pleasures, and a slave to his passions, his subjects see him as no better than a cremation fire. If a king fails to attend to affairs himself and in timely fashion, those affairs come to grief, so too does his kingdom and the king himself. The ruler of men who is not his own master, grants no audience, or makes no use of spies is shunned by men, just as elephants avoid a muddy riverbank.

[6–10] "If rulers of men are not their own masters and fail to protect their realm, their prosperity disappears, like mountains sunk beneath the sea. How can you remain king when, though staunchly opposed by gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas*, you do not even bother to use spies? Rulers of men who do not master espionage, diplomacy, or their treasuries, your highness, are no better than common men. Kings are called farsighted precisely because, through their spies, they can see anything, however far away. But you, surrounded by worthless advisers, I believe, have made no use of spies, and thus you are unaware that your people, and Janasthāna, have been destroyed.

[11–16] "Fourteen thousand fearsome *rākṣasas* have been killed by a single man, Rāma, and with them both Khara and Dūṣaṇa. Tireless Rāma has assaulted Janasthāna, and he has thus made the Daṇḍakas safe and won security for the seers. But consumed with lust, negligent, and no longer your own master, Rāvaṇa, you are unaware of the danger present in your realm. In times of trouble no one runs to aid a king who has been cruel and ungenerous, negligent, haughty, and treacherous. For when a ruler of men is arrogant and aloof, conceited and quick to anger, in times of trouble even his own people will slay him. A king who ignores his affairs, blind to dangers, is quickly toppled from his kingship—and the wretch is then not worth a straw.

[17–23] "Dry logs have some use, even clods of dirt or dust, but not a ruler of the earth fallen from power. For no matter how able, a deposed king is as useless as a worn-out garment or a crushed garland. But a king who is alert, well informed, and self-controlled, knowing what must be done and acting in keeping with righteousness, enjoys a long reign. The king who,

though his eyes be closed in sleep, watches with the eye of diplomacy, and who shows his grace no less than his wrath, is honored by his people. But you are a fool, Rāvaṇa, and devoid of such virtues, and so you lack spies to tell you of the huge massacre of the *rākṣasas*. A king who misjudges his enemy and is addicted to sensual pleasures fails to recognize the proper time and place for things and gives no thought to weighing the pros and cons of an issue. Such a king soon ruins his kingdom and himself." Rāvaṇa paid heed as she recited his failings in this fashion, and for some time afterward the lord of night-roaming *rākṣasas*, with all his wealth and pride and power, sat lost in reflection.

Sarga 32

[1–3] When the raging Śūrpaṇakhā had finished her harsh speech, Rāvaṇa too was filled with rage, and from where he sat among his ministers he began to question her: "Who is this Rāma? What does he look like? How powerful is he, how valorous? And for what reason has he entered the impassable Daṇḍaka forest? What weapon could Rāma possibly have with which he killed in combat the *rākṣasas* Khara, Dūṣaṇa, and Triśiras?"

[4–6] Questioned in this fashion by the lord of the *rākṣasas*, the *rākṣasa* woman, blind with rage, proceeded to tell all she knew of Rāma: "Rāma is the son of Daśaratha. He has long arms and large eyes and resembles Kandarpa, the god of love, though clad in barkcloth and black antelope hides. He has a bow like Śakra's, banded with gold, and, drawing it to its fullest, he shoots flaming iron arrows that, like snakes, carry deadly poison.

[7–11] "I could not even see powerful Rāma take up his terrible arrows in combat, draw his bow, or shoot. But I could see the army cut down by his hail of arrows, like a tall stand of grain is cut down by Indra with a shower of hailstones. Fighting on foot, all alone, with those sharp arrows he killed fourteen thousand fearsome *rākṣasas* in a mere moment, and a half-minute later he killed Khara and Dūṣaṇa as well. He has made the Daṇḍakas safe and won security for the seers. I alone barely escaped from the great and celebrated Rāma. Although he humiliated me, he shrank from killing a woman.

[12–15] "He has a mighty brother, of equal prowess and virtue, who is loyal and devoted to him, the brave Lakṣmaṇa. Implacable and invincible, sure of victory with his boldness, power, and intelligence, he is always

there, Rāma's right arm, a veritable second self. Rāma also has a lawful wife named Sītā, princess of Videha. And what an illustrious woman she is, with her large eyes, slender waist, and full hips. No goddess, no *gandharva* woman, no *yakṣa* or *kinnara* woman, no mortal woman so beautiful have I ever seen before on the face of this earth.

[16–20] "He who claims Sītā as his wife and receives her delighted embraces would live more happily than anyone else in all the worlds, the smasher of citadels, Indra himself, included. She is a woman of good character, with a form beyond all praise, a beauty unequaled on earth. She would make a perfect wife for you, and you a perfect husband for her. How broad her hips, how full and high her breasts, how lovely her face. Why, I all but brought her back to you myself to be your wife. The moment you see Vaidehī's full-moon face, you will find yourself at the mercy of the arrows of Manmatha, the god of love. If it is your intention to make her your wife, put your right foot forward and set out at once to win her.

[21–24] "And also, lord of *rākṣasas*, please do a favor for the *rākṣasas* and kill that cruel Rāma, who is living in an ashram. For once you have slain him and the great chariot-warrior Lakṣmaṇa with your sharp arrows, you will then happily enjoy Sītā, her husband slain, to your heart's content. If what I am saying meets with your approval, Rāvaṇa, lord of *rākṣasas*, you must do as I say without a moment's hesitation. Now that you have heard how the night-roaming *rākṣasas* of Janasthāna were killed by the straight-flying arrows of Rāma, and how Khara and Dūṣaṇa were killed, you must act at once."

Sarga 33

[1–5] [m]When Rāvaṇa had heard Śūrpaṇakhā's hair-raising report, he dismissed his advisers and turned his thoughts to what he should do. After pondering the question, examining it carefully, and weighing the pros and cons, the strengths and weaknesses, he decided exactly what to do, and, his mind firmly resolved, he made his way to the lovely carriage house. The overlord of the *rākṣasas* went secretly to the carriage house and ordered his driver to make a chariot ready. Thus ordered, the charioteer moved quickly and at once made ready the chariot, a splendid one prized by his master.

[6–10] It was a golden, jewel-encrusted chariot that flew wherever one desired. Harnessed to it were donkeys decked out with trappings of gold,

their faces like those of *piśācas*. The majestic overlord of the *rākṣasas*, younger brother of the bestower of riches, Kubera, ascended the chariot. Then, with the rumble of a storm cloud he set out for the ocean, the lord of streams and rivers. Ten-faced Rāvaṇa carried with him a white yak-tail fly whisk and a white parasol, and he sparkled with jewelry of burnished gold and the glossy beryl that he wore. Dressed in exquisite regalia, the twenty-armed enemy of the thirty gods and slayer of the principal sages resembled, with his ten heads, the ten-peaked king of the mountains. Mounted on his chariot that flew wherever one desired, the overlord of the *rākṣasas* appeared like a thundercloud in the sky ringed with lightning and a flight of *balāka* cranes.

[11–15] Powerful Rāvaṇa gazed down upon the rocky coast, dotted with thousands of different fruit-bearing and flowering trees. It was filled with lotus ponds with cool, clear water and sprawling ashrams with sacrificial altars. It was teeming with plantain trees and *āḍhakī* shrubs growing densely and coconut palms lending their beauty, along with *sālas*, *tālas*, *tamālas*, and other flowering trees. Supreme seers given to rigorous fasting graced it; as did great serpents and birds, *gandharvas* and *kinnaras* by the thousands; perfected beings who had mastered desire, celestial bards, and various kinds of sages—*ājas*, *vaikhānasas*, *māṣas*, *vālakhilyas*, and *marīcipas*.

[16–20] There were *apsarases* by the thousands, all skilled in the sports of lovemaking. Their jewelry and garlands were heavenly; heavenly too was their beauty. It was a place the majestic wives of the gods would visit and touch with their majesty, where hosts of *dānavas* wandered, as did the gods, who drink the nectar of immortality. It was full of *haṃsas*, *krauñcas*, and *plavas*, and it echoed with the call of *sārasas*. There were lovely carpets of cat’s-eye beryl, made smooth and glossy by the ocean’s force. Hastening onward, the younger brother of Kubera, bestower of riches, saw on all sides spacious white chariots that could fly wherever one desired. They belonged to those who had conquered higher worlds by their acts of asceticism. They were all decked with heavenly garlands, and they gave forth the sound of musical instruments and singing. There were *gandharvas* and *apsarases* to be seen as well.

[21–28] He saw pleasant forests of sandalwood, thousands of trees with gratifying redolence and roots juicy with resin; forests and orchards of fine

aloewood, noble *takkolas* and fragrant fruit trees, *tamāla* flowers and *marica* shrubs; heaps of pearls drying on the shore, carpets of conch shells, mounds of coral, mountains of gold and silver everywhere; enchanting cascades and pools of clear water. His gaze fell on cities crowded with elephants, horses, and chariots, filled with grain and riches, adorned with women like perfect jewels. Such was the shore of the ocean, king of rivers, everywhere level and smooth, with breezes gently caressing. It was as if the very summit of heaven had come into view. And there he saw a banyan tree where seers were gathered.

[29–34] Massive as a storm cloud, its branches extended a hundred leagues in every direction; and to one of these branches, long ago, mighty Garuḍa had come, carrying a huge tortoise and elephant on which to feed. But the leafy branch suddenly gave way under the weight of mighty Suparṇa, greatest of birds. Upon it supreme seers had gathered together: *vaikhānasas*, *māṣas*, *vālakhilyas*, *marīcipas*, *ajas*, and *dhūmras*. In his compassion for them, righteous Garuḍa rushed up and caught the branch—a hundred leagues long—in a single claw, with both the elephant and the tortoise clinging to it still. After devouring their flesh, the greatest of birds used the branch to lay waste the realm of the Niṣādas. He had freed the great sages and felt delight beyond compare. And this delight made him twice as bold and resolute. He resolved to go in quest of the nectar of immortality. Shattering the iron latticework and breaking into the supernal treasure-house, he stole the nectar from its hiding place in the palace of great Indra.

[35–38] This was the banyan called Subhadra that Rāvaṇa, the younger brother of Kubera, bestower of riches, now beheld. Hosts of great seers still frequented it, and the claw marks left by Suparṇa were still to be seen. Upon reaching the farther shore of the ocean, the lord of rivers, he spied an ashram in a secluded, holy, and lovely stretch of forest. And there he saw the *rākṣasa* Mārīca, who wore black antelope hides, matted hair, and barkcloth and practiced rigorous fasting. Rāvaṇa met with him according to custom, and then, clever speaker that he was, addressed these following words to the *rākṣasa*.

Sarga 34

[1–5] Rāvaṇa said: "Mārīca, my dear friend, please listen to what I have to tell you. I am troubled, and you are my greatest solace when I am troubled. You know Janasthāna where once dwelt my brother Khara, great-armed Dūṣaṇa, my sister Śūrpaṇakhā, the mighty *rākṣasa* Triśiras, an eater of raw flesh, and many another heroic night-roaming *rākṣasa* who was tried and tested. On my orders the *rākṣasas* had made their dwelling there, oppressing the sages who followed the ways of righteousness in the great wilderness—fourteen thousand awesome *rākṣasas*, heroes tried and tested, who bowed to the will of Khara.

[6–10] "But just now these *rākṣasas* of Janasthāna, powerful and ever vigilant, met in combat with Rāma. Rāma, in a fury, but without one harsh word, set his bow and arrows to work on the field of battle. And with his keen arrows this mere man, fighting on foot, killed fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* of fierce, blazing energy. He killed Khara and struck down Dūṣaṇa in combat, he killed Triśiras as well and has made the Daṇḍakas safe. This Rāma who destroyed the army is a short-lived mortal, a disgrace to the kshatriyas, a man whose own father cast him out in anger, together with his wife.

[11–15] "A man of no character, and a cruel, vicious, greedy, intemperate fool, he has forsaken righteousness and, in his unrighteousness, takes pleasure in others' misery. And it was he who, without provocation, relying only on brute force, mutilated my sister in the wilderness, cutting off her ears and nose. He has a wife named Sītā, a woman like the daughter of the gods. I mean to abduct her by force from Janasthāna, and you must assist me. For with you and my brothers at my side to assist me, mighty Mārīca, I would think nothing of facing all the gods united in battle. So you must assist me, *rākṣasa*, as I know you can, for you have no equal in might, in battle, and in pride.

[16–20] "It is for this purpose that I have approached you, night-roaming *rākṣasa*. Now listen, and I shall tell you what you can do to assist me. Having turned yourself into a golden deer dappled with silver spots, you must go grazing near Rāma's ashram within sight of Sītā. When Sītā sees you in the form of this deer, she will surely tell her husband and Lakṣmaṇa, 'You must catch it!' Then, once the two of them are gone and the place deserted, nothing can stop me from carrying Sītā off, as Rāhu, the demon of the eclipse, carries off the radiance of the moon. Afterward, with Rāma

weakened over the abduction of his wife, I know that I can easily kill him and so gain my innermost heart's desire."

[21–22] But the moment great Mārīca heard mention of Rāma, his mouth went dry and he was seized with utter terror. [n]Well acquainted as he was with Rāma's prowess in the great forest, he was terrified, and his heart sank in despair. Cupping his hands in reverence, he made a forthright reply for both Rāvaṇa's good and his own.

Sarga 35

[1–6] After listening to the words of the lord of the *rākṣasas*, the wise and eloquent Mārīca replied: "How easy to find those who say what you want to hear, your majesty; how difficult to find one who gives—or heeds—unpleasant but sound advice. Clearly you know nothing of Rāma, since you are too careless to make use of spies—not how great his might, how distinguished his virtues, and how like great Indra or Varuṇa he is. I fear no *rākṣasa* on earth will be safe from harm, my friend. I fear that Rāma in his rage will empty the world of them. I fear that the daughter of Janaka was born to take your life. I fear some awful doom will strike because of Sītā. I fear the city of Laṅkā, ruled by a lord like you—dissolute and a slave to his passions—will perish, and with it you and all the *rākṣasas*.

[7–11] "A king like you, of poor judgment and poor character, a slave to his passions, takes bad advice and ends up destroying his kingdom, his people, and himself. Rāma, the delight of Kausalyā, was not forsaken by his father. It is absolutely false to say he knows no bounds, is greedy, of bad character, or a disgrace to the kshatriyas. He is not lacking in virtue or righteousness, nor is he vicious; on the contrary, he is devoted to the welfare of all creatures. When the righteous prince saw how Kaikeyī had deceived his father, he accepted forest exile to preserve the truth of his father's word. To please Kaikeyī and his father, Daśaratha, he gave up the luxuries of kingship and entered the Daṇḍaka forest.

[12–17] "Rāma is not cruel, dear friend, or stupid or intemperate. You must not say such things; they are completely untrue. Rāma is righteousness incarnate, a just man who strives for truth. He is king of all this world, as Vāsava is of the gods. How can you hope to violently abduct Vaidehī, who is protected by her own blazing energy. It would be like taking the sunlight from Vivasvant, the sun. You must not rashly enter the fire that is

unassailable Rāma, who blazes up in battle with his bow and sword as kindling and his arrows as its flames. Armed with his bow and arrows, this hero implacably destroys the armies of his foes. When the mouth of his bow gapes wide and blazes and the fiery tongues of his arrows dart out, Rāma becomes Yama, the ender of all things, himself. Do not get too near him, my friend, lest you lose every pleasure, your kingship, and the life you hold so dear.

[18–23] "Janaka's daughter belongs to one who is of immeasurable might. You will not be able carry her off in the forest, as her refuge is Rāma's bow. For he loves fair-waisted Sītā more than life itself, and she has always been a faithful wife. He is a blazing fire, and she the flame that leaps from it. What can you possibly gain, overlord of the *rākṣasas*, by this futile adventure? For the moment you face him in battle it will be the end of you—your life, your every pleasure, and your hard-won kingship. Consult with all your righteous advisers, with Vibhīṣaṇa at their head, and only then should you decide for yourself. Weigh first the advantages and disadvantages, the strengths and weaknesses, and honestly compare your power and Rāghava's. Then, once you decide where your true interests lie, you should do what is appropriate. As for me, I do not think it is appropriate for you to meet the prince of Kosala in battle. Listen for a moment longer to my final words, overlord of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, and I shall tell you what is fitting and appropriate."

Sarga 36

[1–6] "Once upon a time I too wandered this earth in pride of power, tall as a mountain and possessing the strength of a thousand elephants. Resembling a blue-black cloud, wearing a crest jewel and earrings of burnished gold, and armed with an iron club, I would roam the Daṇḍaka forest, feeding on the flesh of seers and striking fear into all the world. But then the great sage, righteous Viśvāmitra, who was terrified of me, came in person to the lord of men Daśaratha and addressed him as follows: 'Let Rāma vigilantly protect me at the time of the lunar sacrifice, lord of men, for a terrible fear of Mārīca has arisen within me.' Addressed in this fashion by the great and illustrious sage Viśvāmitra, the righteous King Daśaratha replied to him, '°Rāghava is not yet sixteen years old and is unpracticed in

arms. I, on the other hand, am prepared to go with all the army at my command and slay your enemy, best of sages, just as you desire.’

[7–11] “When he was addressed in this way by the king, the sage once again said to him: ‘There is no power on earth apart from Rāma that is a match for that *rākṣasa*. A mere boy he may be, but he is mighty and capable of subduing him. I will take Rāma and go. My blessings on you, slayer of your foes.’ When he had spoken thus, the sage Viśvāmitra took the prince and returned delighted to his own ashram. Then, once the sage was consecrated for sacrifice in the Daṇḍaka forest, Rāma took up his position nearby, twanging his magnificent bow. He was just a beardless youth, standing bow in hand, clad only in a single garment—yet he was dark and majestic, with lovely eyes, a topknot, and a garland of gold.

[12–15] “Resembling the crescent moon rising, Rāma shed the radiance of his blazing energy over the Daṇḍaka forest. It was then that I came, resembling a storm cloud, wearing earrings of burnished gold. Powerful in my possession of a boon, I arrogantly approached the ashram. He spotted me as soon as I entered, and instantly I raised my weapon, but all he did on seeing me was to calmly string his bow. In my folly I was contemptuous of Rāghava—‘He is just a boy,’ I thought—and so I charged headlong at Viśvāmitra’s altar.

[16–22] “Then he shot a sharp, enemy-slaying arrow and its impact hurled me into the ocean, a hundred leagues away. The force of Rāma’s arrow carried me far away and dropped me insensible into the bottomless waters of the ocean. When, much later, I regained consciousness, dear friend, I made my way back to the city of Laṅkā. Thus did I escape on that occasion, but my companions were struck down by this ‘mere boy, unpracticed in arms,’ the tireless Rāma. So if, despite my warning, you quarrel with Rāma, it will not be long before terrible misfortune befalls you and you perish. And upon the *rākṣasas*—all of whose care it is to master the sports of lovemaking and hold crowded fairs and festivals—you shall bring down misery and disaster. And so, on account of Maithilī you shall see Laṅkā laid to waste, along with its array of mansions and palaces, and all the precious objects that adorn it. For although they may commit no evil themselves, the innocent perish through association with evil, like fish in a pool of snakes.

[23–28] “You shall see the *rākṣasas*, who anoint their bodies with heavenly sandalwood cream and adorn themselves with heavenly jewelry, struck down on the ground through your own transgression. And you shall see the surviving night-roaming *rākṣasas* fleeing in the ten directions with their wives—if their wives have not been carried off—and seeking refuge in vain. Yes, you shall surely see Laṅkā enmeshed in a net of arrows, engulfed in fiery flames, its dwellings burned. You already have thousands of lovely women in your harem, your majesty; be content with your own wives, *rākṣasa*, and thus preserve your House. If you want to continue enjoying your prestige, prosperity, kingship, and your own precious life, you must give no offense to Rāma. But if, despite this warning from me, your friend, you violently assault Sītā, then, your army destroyed, you and all your kinsmen shall go down to the house of Yama, your lives taken by Rāma’s arrows.”

Sarga 37

[1–5] “Thus did I barely escape him then in battle. But now hear what happened next. Although I had been dealt with like this, undaunted, I returned to the Daṇḍaka forest accompanied by two *rākṣasas* in the shape of animals. I roamed the wilderness of the Daṇḍaka as a huge, powerful animal with sharp horns and a flaming tongue, feeding on flesh. I roamed among sites of *agnihotra* rituals, places of pilgrimage, and sacred trees, a most dreaded creature, Rāvaṇa, assaulting the ascetics. Slaughtering the ascetics who followed the ways of righteousness in the Daṇḍaka wilderness, I would drink their blood and devour their flesh.

[6–10] “And so, feeding on the flesh of seers, terrifying all who lived in the forest, I roamed through the Daṇḍaka, a savage creature drunk on blood. Now once, as I was roaming through the Daṇḍaka wilderness, undermining righteousness, I again encountered Rāma. He had adopted the life of an ascetic, given to rigorous fasting and devoted to the welfare of all creatures. The beautiful Vaidehī was present too, and the great chariot-warrior Lakṣmaṇa. I felt contempt for mighty Rāma, who was living in the forest: ‘He’s just an ascetic now,’ I thought, recalling our former enmity. In the form of an animal, I lowered my sharp horns and attacked him in a towering rage. I remembered that earlier blow, and, fool that I was, I sought to kill him.

[11–15] “But he drew his powerful bow and shot three sharp, foe-killing arrows, as swift as Suparṇa or the wind. Those strong-jointed, blood-drinking arrows resembled thunderbolts, utterly terrifying, and all three of them came at once. But knowing Rāma’s prowess, having encountered the danger once before, I cunningly dodged them and so escaped while the other two *rākṣasas* were killed. Escaping Rāma’s arrow, barely saving my life, I wandered off and came to this place as an ascetic practicing *yoga* and meditation. But still, behind every tree I seem to see Rāma, clad in barkcloth and black antelope hides, wielding his bow like Yama, the ender of all things, himself, with noose in hand.

[16–20] “Or rather, in my fear I see thousands of Rāmas. Rāvaṇa, this whole wilderness appears to me to have become nothing but Rāma. It is Rāma I see, lord of *rākṣasas*, even when no one is near; I see him in my dreams and start up, half out of my mind. I am so terrified of Rāma that even words beginning with the letter ‘r’—such as ‘riches’ or ‘roads’—fill me with terror, Rāvaṇa. I know full well his power. It is impossible for you to fight him, *rākṣasa*. So either do battle with Rāma or forgive him. Only do not mention Rāma if you hope to see me again. I say this only for my kinsman’s good, for if you fail to heed my words, you and all your kin will surely lose your lives in battle, killed by Rāma’s straight-flying arrows.”

Sarga 38

[1–5] Although Mārīca had advised him what was best and appropriate, Rāvaṇa rejected it just as a man on the point of death might his medicine. And although Mārīca had spoken words that were to Rāvaṇa’s advantage and benefit, still, driven as he was by Kāla, the overlord of the *rākṣasas* replied to him with these harsh and inappropriate words: “What utter nonsense you are telling me, Mārīca; like seed sown in a desert, nothing at all will come of it. Your words cannot dissuade me from cutting down Rāma in battle. He is, after all, a mere man, an evil, foolish one at that, who abandoned his loved ones, his kingship, his mother and father, and went off to the forest at a moment’s notice on the orders of a woman.

[6–10] “And since he killed Khara in battle, I must by all means—and in your presence—carry off Sītā, the woman he loves more than life itself. Such, Mārīca, is the firm resolve in my heart, and not even all the gods and *asuras*, Indra included, can stop me. You may speak only when asked to

give arguments for and against, or to say what might be either helpful or harmful regarding the decision as to what to do. A wise counselor, if he seeks what is best for his king and for himself, should speak only when asked, raising his hands cupped in reverence. He must never speak in opposition to the overlord of the earth, but offer only beneficial advice gently, earnestly, and courteously.

[11–15] "For a king does not welcome even beneficial advice if it is insulting and disrespectful, for he deserves respect. The power of kings is immeasurable, for they are able to take on five different forms. They can be as hot as Agni, god of fire, as valorous as Indra, king of the gods, as mild as Soma, the moon god, as punitive as Yama, the god of death, or as gracious as Varuṇa, god of the waters. Therefore, kings must be shown respect and honor in all circumstances. But you are ignorant of what is right and are fixed in delusion. In your perversity, *rākṣasa*, you speak to me thus so harshly when I am paying you a visit. I did not ask you about the advantages or disadvantages, or about what would best for me. In this deed that needs to be done, sir, you will assist me. You must become a golden deer dappled with silver spots and, once you have enticed Vaidehī, you can go where you please.

[16–21] "When Maithilī sees you as an illusory, golden deer, she will be wonder struck, and at once she will tell Rāma, 'Bring it to me.' Then, once Kākutstha and Lakṣmaṇa are gone, I shall carry off Vaidehī at my leisure, just as thousand-eyed Indra once did Śacī. After you have done what I require of you, *rākṣasa*, you can go where you please. I shall even bestow half my kingdom upon you, if you are true to your vows, Mārīca. An auspicious journey to you, dear friend, and may it lead to the success of our undertaking. After I have tricked Rāghava and gained possession of Sītā without a fight, I shall return with you to Laṅkā, my mission accomplished. You will carry through this mission of mine, even if I have to force you. He who stands in opposition to a king will never experience happiness. Now, should you encounter Rāma, there is a possibility that you might lose your life; but if you oppose me, your death is certain. Consider it carefully in your mind and then do as you see fit."

Sarga 39

[1–5] Given this imperious, yet perverse command, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Mārīca made this harsh reply to the overlord of the *rākṣasas*: “What evildoer, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, would counsel the destruction of your sons, your kingdom, your ministers, and yourself? What malevolent wretch could be so wicked, your majesty, as to resent your happiness? Who could have advised you that opening the doors of death is sound strategy? It is only too clear that your enemies, powerless themselves, hope you will perish, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, before the onslaught of one even mightier. What lowly wretch could have given you this disastrous advice, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, hoping that you might perish by your own doing?

[6–10] “Why do you not put to death those advisers, who are worthy of execution, Rāvaṇa, since they fail to restrain you in every way from this evil path. For virtuous ministers must by all means restrain a wayward king from taking an evil course. Yet you, who should have been restrained, were not restrained. It is through their master’s grace, foremost of conquerors, that advisers acquire what righteousness, profit, pleasure, and glory they may have, night-roaming *rākṣasa*. But all this counts for nothing, Rāvaṇa, should their master go astray; and if he loses his sense of virtue, all the people come to grief. For kings are the source of both righteousness and victory, foremost of conquerors. Therefore, the lord of men must be protected in all circumstances.

[11–15] “But the brutal man will not safeguard a king’s position, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, nor will the perverse or undisciplined man. For the king and with him all those advisers who counsel brutal measures are quickly overthrown, like chariots driven too fast down uneven roads by incompetent charioteers. In this world, many virtuous people who practice their proper duties perish with all that is theirs through the faults of others. Subjects under the protection of a perverse and brutal master, Rāvaṇa, prosper no more than do sheep under the protection of a jackal. Thus, all the *rākṣasas* of whom you, Rāvaṇa, are such a cruel, imprudent, intemperate king, shall inevitably perish.

[16–20] “You are bringing down upon your head a dreadful, unfathomable disaster. What good can come of this if you should perish along with your army? For once he has slain me, Rāma will kill you, though I at least will find fulfillment in dying at the hand of my enemy. You should consider me dead the instant Rāma sets eyes on me, and know that you

yourself and all your kinsmen are dead the moment you carry off Sītā. If with my help you abduct Sītā from the ashram, you shall cease to exist, and so shall I, and Laṅkā and all the *rākṣasas*. I have your best interests at heart, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, in giving you this warning, yet you ignore my words. But then, a man on the point of death, his life breaths fading, will not heed his friends' beneficial advice."

Sarga 40

[1–3] Then, after Mārīca had spoken harshly in this fashion, he was despondent. But terrified of the lord of night-roaming *rākṣasas*, he said to Rāvaṇa: "Let's go. The minute Rāma sets eyes on me again, bearing his sword and his bow and arrows, then, his weapon upraised to slay me, he will put an end to my life. But what can I do in the face of a person as evil-minded as you? So here, I am coming, my dear friend. Good luck to you, night-roaming *rākṣasa*."

[4–6] The *rākṣasa* was delighted by his words, and embracing him warmly, he spoke these words: "These are the proud words I had wanted to hear from you. Before you were like some other night-roaming *rākṣasa*; now you are the real Mārīca. So please quickly mount my flying chariot, adorned with jewels and harnessed with *piśāca*-faced donkeys."

[7–11] Rāvaṇa and Mārīca then boarded the palatial chariot and at once left the circle of ashrams behind. And so, viewing the towns far below, the expanses of forest, the mountains, streams, kingdoms, and cities, they arrived in due course in the Daṇḍaka forest. And then Rāvaṇa, the overlord of the *rākṣasas*, together with Mārīca beheld Rāghava's ashram. Then, alighting from the gold-adorned chariot, Rāvaṇa took Mārīca by the hand and said: "What you see here, surrounded by plantain trees, is the site of Rāma's ashram. Quickly now, my friend, please do what we came here to do."

[12–16] Upon hearing Rāvaṇa's words, the *rākṣasa* Mārīca then turned himself into a deer and began to graze near the entrance to Rāma's ashram. His antlers were tipped with fine gems, his face mottled dark and light, one part like pink lotuses and the other like blue ones. His ears were like sapphires or blue lotuses, his neck was gently elongated, his belly gleamed like sapphire. His flanks were like the pale, velvety *madhūka* flower, and golden lotus shoots, and his hooves glowed like cat's-eye beryl. He was

slim with slender legs and was brilliantly endowed with a tail tinged with every color of the rainbow, Indra's weapon. He was covered with all sorts of precious stones that lent him a glossy and captivating hue. For indeed, in a mere moment, the *rākṣasa* had become an exquisite deer.

[17–20] And then, that *rākṣasa* took on a lovely and captivating form, variegated with different precious metals. Shedding a brilliant radiance over the forest and Rāma's ashram, he wandered about grazing in the grasslands, just like a deer, in order to entice Vaidehī. Dappled with hundreds of silver spots, a lovely sight to see, he grazed among the trees, breaking off and nibbling the tender shoots. He wandered slowly, here and there, through the plantain grove and among the *karṇikāra* trees, at a slow pace, trying to stay within range of Sītā's vision.

[21–24] The great deer, its back variegated like a blue lotus, was resplendent as it wandered at will near Rāma's ashram. Going back and forth again and again, appearing suddenly here and suddenly there, the splendid deer wandered about. One moment he would frisk about, then lie upon the ground; he would approach the ashram's entrance and then move off to a herd of other deer. And then once more he would return with the other deer following behind, hoping Sītā would notice him, this *rākṣasa* who had become a deer.

[25–32] He roamed about, gamboling in graceful circles. The other deer stared at him, as did the other forest creatures. They came close and sniffed him, and then all scampered off in the ten directions. For he was still a *rākṣasa*, of course, who delighted in killing animals. But to conceal his true nature he did not eat these forest animals, even when they touched him. Now at that very moment, lovely-eyed Vaidehī, who was busy gathering blossoms, came out beyond the trees. The fair-faced woman with her intoxicating eyes wandered about gathering blossoms: *karṇikāra*, *aśoka*, and mango. The beautiful, fair-faced lady, who did not deserve life in the wilderness, caught sight of the jewel-studded deer, his limbs sparkling with gems and pearls. [p]With her sparkling teeth and ruby lips she stood there, eyes blossoming with wonder, staring longingly at the deer and his silvery hide. And the illusory deer watched Rāma's beloved too, and wandered all about there, illuminating the forest, so it seemed. And when Sītā, daughter of Janaka, saw that jewel-studded deer, the likes of which no one had ever seen before, she stood lost in sheer wonder.

Sarga 41

[1–6] The flawless beauty with full hips and a complexion of polished gold was picking flowers when she spotted the deer with his beautiful flanks of gold and silver hue. In delight she cried out to her husband and to Lakṣmaṇa, who stood armed and ready. At her call, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, those tigers among men, glanced up in Vaidehī's direction and saw the deer. When he saw it, Lakṣmaṇa at once became suspicious and said to Rāma: "I am sure that deer is none other than the *rākṣasa* Mārīca. When kings on a hunt enter the forest in delight, Rāma, this evil creature, who can take on any form at will, assumes this or that disguise and kills them. He is an expert in illusion, tiger among men, and this is the illusory form of a deer he has taken on, as dazzling as a mirage.

[7–11] "For nowhere in all the world, Rāghava, master of the world, does there exist such a deer, sparkling with gems. Without a doubt, this is an illusion." But even as Kākutstha was speaking in this fashion, bright-smiling Sītā interrupted—her heart ravished by the disguise—and said in great delight: "Respected husband, what an exquisite deer! He has stolen my heart away. Please catch him for me, my great-armed husband. He shall be our plaything. Here at our ashram many beautiful animals come wandering in droves: yaks and gaur, apes, herds of nilgai, monkeys, and *kinnaras*. Lovely and powerful animals are always grazing here, my great-armed husband.

[12–16] "But never before have we seen an animal such as this, your majesty, none so brilliant, tame, and radiant as this magnificent deer. His body sparkles with different colors and is speckled with chips of precious stones; he illuminates the entire forest, shining like the hare-marked moon. Oh! What coloring! What beauty! What sweet sounds he makes! He has utterly stolen my heart away, this marvelous, sparkling deer. If you can catch him alive, the wonderful deer will be a thing to marvel at, a source of wonder. And when our sojourn in the forest has ended and we are back in the kingdom once again, this deer will adorn the women's quarters.

[17–21] "The heavenly form of this deer will be a source of wonder for Bharata, my brother-in-law, and for my mothers-in-law as well, my lord. But if you cannot catch the splendid deer alive, tiger among men, then his hide would be a source of great pleasure to me. For were the creature to be killed, I should like his golden skin to be stretched over a cushion of straw,

to make a seat. You might think it willful, heartless, or unladylike of me, but I am so filled with wonder at the beauty of this creature. Even the mind of Rāghava is lost in wonder at the sight of him. For, with his golden hide and horns of precious gems, he shows all the brilliance of the morning sun, all the luster of the starry heavens."

[22–27] When Rāghava heard these words of Sītā's and looked at the amazing deer, he addressed his brother Lakṣmaṇa in delight: "Just see how Vaidehī longs to have this deer, Lakṣmaṇa. Because of his surpassing beauty he shall die today. For not even in the renowned forest of Nandana, nor in famous Caitraratha, let alone on earth, Saumitri, is any such deer to be found. The lovely patterns on the deer's hair, both with the nap and against it, are brilliantly flecked with chips of gold. And look how when he yawns his gleaming, flamelike tongue darts from his mouth like lightning from a cloud. His face gleams with sapphire and crystal, his belly glows with conch shell and pearl. Indeed, this indescribable deer could beguile the heart of anyone.

[28–32] "Anyone would be lost in wonder to see this heavenly form fashioned of every precious stone, glittering like gold. Both for meat and sport, Lakṣmaṇa, kings armed with bows go hunting and kill animals in the deep forest. And in the deep forests they also gather riches with determination, precious metals of all sorts, veined with gems and gold. But here is all the wealth a man could ask for, Lakṣmaṇa, riches enough to swell his coffers, just as Śukra's coffers come to be swelled with all the wealth men dream of. Those who know the theory behind material success and those who achieve it, Lakṣmaṇa, say a man in want of something should go and get it without hesitation.

[33–37] "So fair-waisted Vaidehī shall indeed sit with me upon the precious golden hide of this rare deer. There is no hide, I would guess, whether of antelope, gazelle, goat, or sheep, that could be so soft to the touch. This majestic deer and the deer constellation that moves through the sky are both heavenly. On the other hand, if this turns out to be an illusion on the part of that *rākṣasa*, as you have told me, Lakṣmaṇa, then it is my duty to slay him. For the savage, uncontrolled Mārīca does roam the forests injuring the bulls among sages.

[38–42] "He has killed many an overlord of the people, expert bowmen all, while they were out hunting, and so this deer, if it be he, must be slain.

Long ago Vātāpi lived in this place. Overpowering the ascetic brahmans, he would kill them from within their stomachs, just as her embryo kills a she-mule. But after a long time, on one occasion while wandering the world, he encountered the great sage, the mighty Agastya, who, imbued with his blazing energy, made a meal of him. Then, at the conclusion of the feast the holy one perceived that Vātāpi was about to assume his true form again. Smiling, he said to him: 'It was reckless of you, Vātāpi, to overpower the best of the twice-born in this wide world of living beings. And because of that you are now to be digested.'

[43–49] "Just as happened with Vātāpi, Lakṣmaṇa, no *rākṣasa* who treats with scorn someone like me—I who am constant in righteousness and self-controlled—can hope to live. Now that he has fallen into my hands, I will kill him, just as Agastya slew Vātāpi. But you, delight of the Raghus, must remain here armed and on your guard to protect Maithilī. For our first duty is to her. Meanwhile, Saumitri, I intend to go at once to either kill or capture the deer. Just see how Vaidehī longs for the hide of this deer, Lakṣmaṇa. And because of his splendid hide, this deer shall die today. So stay in the ashram with Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, and be on your guard. Meanwhile, I will kill that speckled deer with a single arrow, and, when I have done so, I will take its hide and come back at once. Together with the wise, devoted, and immensely powerful bird Jaṭāyus, you must stay close to Maithilī. Be on your guard every moment, Lakṣmaṇa, and suspicious of everything."

Sarga 42

[1–6] Once he had instructed his brother in this way, the mighty prince, delight of the Raghus, strapped on his gold-hilted sword. He then strapped on a pair of quivers and took up his thrice-curved bow—his true ornament—and set off at a rapid pace. When the deer spied the lord of kings rushing toward him, it led him on, now vanishing through fear, then showing himself again. With sword strapped on and holding his bow, Rāma ran toward the deer, seeing its form shimmering before him. At one moment he would spot it running through the deep forest, temptingly near, and would take his bow in hand, only to look once more and find the deer beyond the range of an arrow. In some stretches of the forest it came into view, seeming to fly through the sky in frightful panic, only to disappear once again.

[7–11] Like the disk of the autumnal moon veiled in ragged clouds, he was visible one minute and invisible at a distance the next. And so, now appearing, now disappearing, he drew Rāghava far away, and Kākutstha, hopelessly deluded by him, flew into a rage. Then, completely exhausted, the deer halted and withdrew to a shady spot in the meadow, not far away, where it appeared surrounded by other forest deer. Spying the deer, mighty Rāma was determined to kill it. The powerful prince nocked his stout bow and drew it back powerfully. Taking aim at the deer, he loosed a gleaming, blazing missile fashioned by Brahmā that glared like a snake as it darted forth.

[12–15] [r]That supreme arrow violently penetrated Mārīca's illusory deer form and, like a bolt of lightning, pierced his heart. The deer leapt high as a *tāla* tree and with a ghastly shriek fell to the ground, tormented by the arrow, his life ebbing away. And as Mārīca lay there dying, he abandoned his illusory form. Realizing that his time had come, he cried out, "Alas! Sītā! Lakṣmaṇa!" in a voice exactly like that of Rāghava. Pierced to the vitals by that incomparable arrow, the huge *rākṣasa* Mārīca abandoned his deer form and assumed his real one and lost his life.

[16–21] For once he was struck down by that arrow, he became a *rākṣasa* again, with huge fangs, a necklace of gold, sparkling earrings, and every other ornament to adorn him. When he saw that fearsome-looking *rākṣasa*, fallen to the ground, Rāma immediately turned his thoughts to Sītā, remembering what Lakṣmaṇa had said and thinking: "The *rākṣasa* died only after crying out at the top of his voice, 'Alas! Sītā! Lakṣmaṇa!' What will be Sītā's state after hearing that? And great-armed Lakṣmaṇa, what will be his state?" As these thoughts came to righteous Rāma, the hair on his body bristled with dread. Then Rāma's despair gave way to a feeling of fear that shot through him with sharp pangs. For upon hearing that cry, he realized that he had actually slain a *rākṣasa* in the form of a deer. After killing another chital and taking its meat, he hurriedly retraced his steps to Janasthāna.

Sarga 43

[1–6] Meanwhile, when Sītā heard that cry of distress, in exactly the same voice as her husband's, off in the forest, she said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Go and find out what has happened to Rāghava. For my heart—my very life—is jarred

from its place by the sound of his crying in deep distress that I heard so clearly. You must rescue your brother, who was crying out in the forest. Run to your brother at once, for he needs help! He has fallen under the power of the *rākṣasas*, like a bull fallen among lions." But even though he was addressed in this way, Lakṣmaṇa, heeding his brother's command, did not go.

[5–8] Then the daughter of Janaka angrily said to him: "You wear the guise of a friend to your brother, Saumitri, but act like his foe, refusing to aid him in his extremity. You hope that Rāma perishes, Lakṣmaṇa, because of me. I think you would be happy should some disaster befall your brother. You have no real affection for him, so you stand there calmly even without being able to see that immensely splendid prince. For with him in danger and me here, how could I prevent what you came here with the sole intention of doing?"

[9–13] Having been spoken to in such a way by Sītā, princess of Videha, Lakṣmaṇa, overwhelmed with tears and grief, replied to her as she stood there as frightened as a doe: "My lady, there is no one, god or man, *gandharva*, great bird, *rākṣasa*, *piśāca*, *kinnara*, animal, or dreaded *dānava* —no one, fair lady, who could match Rāma, the peer of Vāsava, in battle. Rāma cannot be killed in battle. You must not speak this way, for I dare not leave you in this forest without Rāghava. His power cannot be withstood, not by any powers however vast, not by all three worlds up in arms, or the immortal gods themselves, together with their lord.

[14–18] "So let your heart rest easy; give up this anguish. Your husband will soon return after killing that splendid deer. That was clearly not his voice, or any belonging to any divinity. It was an illusion on the part of that *rākṣasa* like a mirage. Rāma entrusted you to me as a sacred trust, shapely Vaidehī. I dare not leave you here alone. Then, too, dear lady, because of the slaughter at Janasthāna and the killing of Khara, we have incurred the enmity of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*. *Rākṣasas* delight in causing harm, Vaidehī, they make all kinds of noises in the deep forest. You need not worry."

[19–24] Now, although what Lakṣmaṇa said was true, Sītā was enraged by his words. Her eyes blazed bright red as she made this harsh reply: "Ignoble, cruel man, disgrace to your House! How pitiful this attempt of yours. I feel certain you are pleased with all this, and that is why you can

talk the way you do. It is not surprising, Lakṣmaṇa, for rivals to be so evil, cruel rivals like you are always plotting in secret. You treacherously followed Rāma to the forest, the two of you alone. You have either been put up to this by Bharata or are secretly plotting to get me. I am married to Rāma, a husband dark as a lotus, with eyes like lotus petals. How could I ever give my love to some ordinary man? I would not hesitate to take my life before your very eyes, Saumitri, for I could not live upon this earth one moment without Rāma."

[25–31] Addressed in this harsh and hair-raising way by Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa maintained his self-control, and with his hands cupped in reverence, he replied to her: "I dare not answer you back, Maithilī, for you are a deity to me. And yet inappropriate words from a woman are hardly surprising. For this is the nature of women the whole world over. Women care nothing for righteousness, they are fickle, sharp-tongued, and divisive. May all the inhabitants of the forest give ear and bear me witness how my words of reason met so harsh a reply from you. Curse you and be damned, that you could so suspect me when I am only following the orders of my *guru*. How like a woman to be so perverse! I am going to Kākutstha. Good luck to you, fair woman. May the spirits of the forest, each and every one, protect you, large-eyed lady. But how ominous the portents that manifest themselves to me! I pray I find you here when I return with Rāma."

[32–37] Now, when Lakṣmaṇa addressed her in this fashion, Janaka's daughter began to weep. Overwhelmed with tears she hotly replied: "Parted from Rāma I will drown myself in the Godāvarī, Lakṣmaṇa, I will hang myself or abandon my body in some desolate place. Or I will drink deadly poison or throw myself into a fire, eater of oblations. I would never touch any man but Rāghava, not even with my foot!" Thus reviling Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā in her sorrow wept sorrowfully and struck her belly with her fists. At the sight of large-eyed Sītā so deeply anguished and weeping, Saumitri was beside himself and tried to comfort her, but she would say nothing more to her husband's brother. Then, cupping his hands in reverence and bowing slightly, Lakṣmaṇa, the self-controlled prince, said farewell to Sītā. And as he set out to find Rāma, he looked back at Maithilī again and again.

Sarga 44

[1–5] Rāghava's younger brother, angered at being spoken to so harshly and sorely longing for Rāma, then set forth without further delay. This was just the opportunity ten-necked Rāvaṇa had been waiting for, and he took advantage of it at once. Assuming the guise of a wandering mendicant, he approached Vaidehī. He was clad in a soft ochre robe, decked out with a topknot, parasol, and sandals, and with a fine staff and water pitcher slung over his left shoulder. And thus in the guise of a mendicant, he approached Vaidehī. Endowed with immense power, he advanced upon her who had been abandoned in the forest by both brothers, just as pitch darkness advances upon the twilight, when both the sun and moon have set. He gazed at the illustrious young princess as ominously as an occluding planet might gaze upon the star Rohiṇī when the hare-marked moon is absent.

[6–11] Perceiving the savage creature of evil deeds, the trees that grew in Janasthāna stopped rustling as the wind ceased to blow. Seeing him looking around with his blood-red eyes, the swift current of the Godāvarī River began to slacken in fear. Ten-necked Rāvaṇa had waited for this opportunity that Rāma had given him. And so, in the guise of a mendicant, he drew closer to Vaidehī. As Vaidehī sat grieving for her husband, the unholy Rāvaṇa in the guise of a holy man edged closer to her, like the slow-moving planet, Saturn, closing in on the bright constellation Citrā. In the guise of a holy man that evil creature was like a deep well concealed by grass. And he stood watching Vaidehī, the illustrious wife of Rāma—a beautiful woman with lovely teeth and lips, and a face like the full moon—as she sat in the leaf hut tormented with grief and tears.

[12–16] The evil-minded, night-roaming *rākṣasa* stole ever closer to Vaidehī, who was dressed in garments of yellow silk, her eyes like lotus petals. Riddled with the arrows of Manmatha, the god of love, and yet intoning the sounds of the *vedas*, the overlord of the *rākṣasas* appeared before the deserted hut and courteously spoke. Rāvaṇa began to praise her, that loveliest of women in the three worlds, a radiant beauty, like the goddess Śrī herself without her lotus, with these words: "Who are you, golden woman dressed in garments of yellow silk? Wearing a lovely garland of lotuses, you resemble a lotus pond yourself. Are you Hrī, the goddess of modesty, or Kīrti, the goddess of fame? Are you Śrī or lovely Lakṣmī or perhaps an *apsaras*, lovely lady? Could you be Bhūti, the

goddess of prosperity, shapely woman, or free-spirited Rati, the goddess of pleasure?

[17–21] “Your teeth are bright white, tapered, and even; your eyes are large and clear, rosy at the corner, black in the center. Your hips are full and broad, your thighs as smooth as an elephant’s trunk. And these, your delightful breasts, how round they are, so [s]firm and [t]gently heaving; how full and lovely they are, as smooth as two *tāla* fruits, with their nipples standing stiff and the rarest gems to adorn them. Graceful lady with your lovely smile, lovely teeth, and lovely eyes, you have swept my heart away just as a river in flood sweeps away its banks. Your waist I could compass with my fingers; how fine is your hair, how firm your breasts. No goddess, no *gandharva* woman, no *yakṣa* or *kinnara* woman, no mortal woman so beautiful have I ever seen before on the face of this earth.

[22–26] “Your beauty, foremost in all the worlds, your delicacy and youth, and the fact of your living here in the woods stir the deepest feelings in my heart. Bless you, you should leave here; this is no place for you to be living. For this is the lair of fearsome *rākṣasas*, who can take on any form at will. Instead, you should be moving about in the finest palaces, in luxuriant, fragrant city gardens. I think that you deserve the finest garlands, beverages, and raiment, and the finest husband, my lovely, black-eyed lady. Could you be one of the Rudras or Maruts, sweet-smiling, shapely woman, or one of the Vasus, perhaps? You look like a goddess to me.

[27–30] “But *gandharvas* do not go here, nor do gods or *kinnaras*, for this is the lair of the *rākṣasas*. How is it you have come here? There are monkeys here and such wild beasts as lions, leopards, tigers, bears, hyenas, and adjutant storks. How is it you do not fear them? And the fearsome elephants that go running wild, maddened by rut—how is it you do not fear them, lovely lady, all alone in the deep wilderness? Who are you? To whom do you belong, where do you come from, my precious, and why are you wandering all alone through the Daṇḍakas, haunted by the fearsome *rākṣasas*?”

[31–34] Praised in this way by evil Rāvaṇa and seeing he had come in the garb of a twice-born brahman, Maithilī honored him with all the acts of hospitality due a guest. First, she brought forward a cushion and offered water for his feet, and then she called him when food was ready, for he had a kindly appearance. So when Maithilī saw that he had come in the garb of

a twice-born—a brahman with a begging bowl and saffron robe—when she saw these accoutrements, it was impossible for her to refuse him, and so she extended him an invitation befitting a brahman, telling him: "Here is a cushion, brahman, please be seated and accept this water for your feet. Here I have made ready for you the best fare the forest has to offer. You may partake of it freely."

[35–36] So Maithilī extended him a cordial invitation, and as Rāvaṇa gazed at her, the wife of the lord of men, he confirmed his resolve to take her by force and, with that, consigned himself to death. Her husband in his honest garb had gone out on the hunt, and she waited for him and Lakṣmaṇa, looking around. But she saw neither Rāma nor Lakṣmaṇa—only the vast, green forest.

Sarga 45

[1–5] Questioned in this way by Rāvaṇa, who had come in the guise of a mendicant to carry her off, Vaidehī, of her own accord, now began to tell him about herself. Sītā reflected for a moment: "Being a brahman and a guest, he might curse me if I do not reply." She then spoke these words: "I am the daughter of Janaka, the great king of Mithilā. Bless you, foremost of twice-born brahmans, my name is Sītā, and I am the wife of Rāma. [u]For twelve years I dwelt in the House of Rāghava, enjoying such pleasures as mortals enjoy and every luxury. [v]Then, in the thirteenth year, the king in concert with his kingly counselors approved the royal consecration of my husband.

[6–10ab–874*] "But just as the preparations for Rāghava's consecration were under way, my mother-in-law named Kaikeyī asked her husband for a boon. For Kaikeyī had married my father-in-law in exchange for a favor. Thus, she had two things she now could demand of her husband, the best of kings and a man who always kept his word: one was the consecration of Bharata, the other, my husband's banishment, saying: 'From this day forth I will not eat, drink, or sleep. I will put an end to my life if Rāma is consecrated.' [w]And as Kaikeyī was speaking in such a fashion, my father-in-law, who had always shown her respect, pleaded with her with offers of commensurate riches. But she would not do what he begged of her. [x]Rāma, my husband, of immense blazing energy, was then twenty-five years old, while I had just passed my eighteenth birthday.

[10cd–15] “[y]His name is renowned throughout the world, his eyes are large, his arms strong. He is virtuous, honest, truthful, and devoted to the welfare of all beings. And then, when Rāma came into his father’s presence for the consecration to begin, it was Kaikeyī who addressed my husband, in a rush of words: ‘Listen to me, Rāghava, and hear what your father has decreed. The kingship is to be given to Bharata uncontested. And as for you, you are to live in the forest for nine years and five. You must go into banishment, Kākutstha, and save your father from falsehood.’ Without a trace of fear my husband, Rāma, answered Kaikeyī with the words, ‘So be it,’ and firm in his vows, did just as she had told him. For Rāma has taken a solemn vow, brahman, one never to be broken: always to give and not receive, to tell the truth and not lie.

[16–20] “Now Rāma has a companion, his half brother Lakṣmaṇa, a tiger among men and heroic slayer of his enemies in battle. This brother Lakṣmaṇa, who keeps to the ways of righteousness and is firm in his vows, followed—bow in hand—when Rāma went into banishment with me. And so the three of us were driven from the kingdom for the sake of Kaikeyī. Thus, it is under compulsion, best of twice-born brahmans, that we now wander the dense forest. So rest a moment; or you can even stay here if you like. My husband will soon return bringing an abundance of food from the forest. But please tell me truthfully your name, your brahmanical lineage, and your family. How is it, twice-born brahman, that you wander all alone in the Daṇḍaka forest?”

[21–27] And as Sītā, the wife of Rāma, was speaking in this fashion, immensely powerful Rāvaṇa, overlord of the *rākṣasas*, made this chilling reply: “I am the one who terrifies the worlds, with all their gods, *asuras*, and great serpents. For, Sītā, I am Rāvaṇa, the supreme lord of the hosts of *rākṣasas*. Now that I have set eyes on you, flawless, golden lady clad in silk, I shall no longer take any pleasure in my own wives. From one place and another I have carried off many splendid women. But, bless you, you must become the chief queen over every one of them. In the middle of the ocean lies my vast city known as Laṅkā, perched upon a mountain peak and ringed by the sea. There, my lovely Sītā, you shall stroll with me through the woodlands, never longing for this life you are leading in the wilderness. Five thousand servant women all adorned with ornaments shall wait upon you, Sītā, if you become my wife.”

[28–31] As she was addressed in this way by Rāvaṇa, Janaka's daughter, that faultless beauty, was enraged and with utter contempt for the *rākṣasa* replied: "I am faithful to Rāma, my husband, who is the equal of great Indra, as unshakable as a great mountain, and as imperturbable as the great sea. I am faithful to Rāma, the great-armed, broad-chested prince, who moves with the boldness of a lion, a lionlike man, a lion among men. I am faithful to Rāma, the king's most cherished son, a great-armed, mighty prince of wide renown and strict self-control, whose face is like the full moon.

[32–36] "But as for you, you are a jackal in the presence of a lioness, to come here seeking me, whom you can never have. You could no more touch me than touch the radiance of the sun. Surely you must be seeing the many golden trees of death, ill-fated Rāvaṇa, if you seek to possess the beloved wife of Rāghava. You are seeking to pluck the fangs from the mouth of a venomous serpent or a swift and ravenous lion, the foe of all beasts. You wish to carry off Mandara, greatest of mountains, in your hand, or to drink the deadly *kālakūṭa* poison and go on your way, taking no harm of it. You are rubbing your eye with a needle, licking a razor with your tongue, if you seek to violate the beloved wife of Rāghava.

[37–40] "You are seeking to swim across the ocean with a boulder tied around your neck, or to carry off the sun and moon with your bare hands, if you seek to assault the beloved wife of Rāghava. If you saw a blazing fire and sought to carry it away in a piece of cloth, that would be like seeking to carry off the virtuous wife of Rāma. You are seeking to walk atop a row of iron-tipped lances, if you seek to violate the proper wife of Rāma. As different as a lion and a jackal in the forest, the ocean and a rivulet, rare wine and sour gruel, so vast is the gulf between Dāśarathi and you.

[41–43] "As different as gold and lead, sandalwood paste and muck, a bull elephant and a cat in the forest, so vast is the gulf between Dāśarathi and you. As different as Garuḍa, the son of Vinatā, and a crow, a peacock and a cormorant, a *sārasa* crane and a vulture in the forest, so vast is the gulf between you and Dāśarathi. As long as Rāma, the equal in majesty to thousand-eyed Indra, walks the earth armed with his bow and arrows, you may carry me off but can never enjoy me, any more than a fly can swallow and digest a diamond."

[44–45] Such were the words the innocent woman addressed to the evil night-roaming *rākṣasa*, but a shudder passed through her body, and she began to quiver like a slender plantain tree tossed by the wind. And when Rāvaṇa, mighty as Mṛtyu himself, observed how Sītā was trembling, he thought to terrify her still further by telling of his House, his power, the name he had won for himself, and the deeds he had done.

Sarga 46

[1–5] As Sītā was speaking in this manner, Rāvaṇa flew into a rage, and, knitting his brow into a frown, he harshly replied: "I am half brother to the lord of wealth Vaiśravaṇa, lovely lady. My name, bless you, is Rāvaṇa, the mighty ten-necked one. In fear of me the gods, *gandharvas*, *piśācas*, great birds, and serpents all flee, just as all creatures in fear of death. Over some matter, my half brother, Vaiśravaṇa, and I came into conflict, and so, in anger, I attacked and defeated him in battle. Tormented by fear of me, he left his own prosperous realm and now dwells on Kailāsa, highest of mountains, with only men to convey him.

[6–9] "For the flying palace that flies wherever one desires, the splendid Puṣpaka, once belonged to him. But I took it through my valor, my beauty, and now use it to travel through the sky. At the mere sight of my face, Maithilī, once my anger has been provoked, the gods with Indra at their head flee in terror. In my presence the wind blows cautiously, and the sun with his scorching rays makes them cool in fear. The leaves on the trees stop rustling, and the rivers slacken their current wherever I am, wherever I go.

[10–13] "On the far shore of the ocean lies my city, Laṅkā, thronged with fearsome *rākṣasas*. It is as splendid as Indra's Amarāvatī. It is a beautiful, dazzling city surrounded by a white rampart, with gateways made of gold and towers of cat's-eye beryl. It is crowded with elephants, horses, and chariots, and the sound of musical instruments resounds there. Its gardens are beautiful, filled with trees bearing any fruit one wants.

[14–18] "Living there with me, proud princess Sītā, you shall forget what it was like to be a mortal woman. For enjoying not only the pleasures mortals enjoy, lovely lady, but divine pleasures too, you shall soon forget that short-lived mortal, Rāma. So feeble is his valor that King Daśaratha, in order to enthrone a favored son, was able to drive him into the forest,

firstborn though he was. What use is this witless Rāma to you, large-eyed woman, a miserable ascetic who lets himself be deposed from the kingship? The lord of all *rākṣasas* has come here in person, of his own accord, out of love. Please do not reject him, who is so deeply wounded by the arrows of Manmatha, the god of love. For if you reject me, timid lady, you shall live to regret it, just like Urvaśī after she spurned, with her foot, as it were, Purūravas."

[19–23] Addressed in this fashion, Vaidehī was overcome with rage. Her eyes grew red, and though all alone in that deserted spot, she made this harsh reply to the lord of *rākṣasas*: "How can you want to commit such an outrage, you who claim Vaiśravaṇa as your brother, a god to whom all beings pay homage? The *rākṣasas* shall inevitably perish, Rāvaṇa, all who have you for their king, a cruel, imprudent, intemperate king. A man might abduct Indra's wife, Śacī herself, and still escape with his life, but for him who carries me, the wife of Rāma, off, there is no hope of life. Yes, one might steal Śacī of incomparable beauty from the hand that wields the thunderbolt and yet long remain alive. But for you, *rākṣasa*, if you assault a woman like me, there can be no escape, even should you drink the nectar of immortality."

Sarga 47

[1–4] Hearing Sītā's words the powerful ten-necked Rāvaṇa clapped his hands and made ready to assume his massive form. And he once more addressed Maithilī, still more harshly than before: "It seems you did not hear, madwoman, when I spoke of my strength and valor. I can lift the earth in my arms while standing in the sky. I can drink up the ocean. And I can slay even Mṛtyu, death himself, in battle. I can shatter the earth with my sharp arrows, madwoman, or bring the sun to a halt. I can take on any form at will. You see before you a husband ready to grant your every wish."

[5–10] And as Rāvaṇa was speaking thus in his wild rage, his yellow-rimmed eyes turned fiery red. Then, suddenly, Rāvaṇa, the younger brother of Vaiśravaṇa, abandoned the kindly form of a beggar and assumed his true shape, one like the appearance of Kāla, god of death, himself. His eyes blazing bright red, with his earrings of burnished gold, and with bow and arrows, he became once more the majestic, ten-faced, night-roaming *rākṣasa*. Abandoning the guise of a mendicant, he assumed his own true

form again, the colossal form of Rāvaṇa, overlord of the *rākṣasas*. With his eyes blazing bright red in his rage, lowering like a bank of storm clouds, and clad in a red garment, Rāvaṇa stood before Maithilī. He glared at her, that perfect jewel of a woman, with her jet-black hair and her radiance, which was like the sun, bringer of light, and the fine clothes and ornaments that she wore. And he said:

[11–14] "If you seek a husband renowned throughout the three worlds, shapely woman, then be mine; for I am a lord worthy of you. If you will love me forever, I shall be a lover to win your praise, and never, my beauty, will I do anything to displease you. Give up your love for this mortal creature and bestow your love on me. What possible virtues could make you love this short-lived Rāma, a failure, stripped of kingship? You fool! You think you are so wise. He is a simpleton, who, at the bidding of a woman, abandoned his kingdom and loved ones to come and live in this forest, the haunt of wild beasts."

[15–20] And after speaking in this way to Sītā, the princess of Mithilā, who deserved the same kindness she always showed others, Rāvaṇa seized her as the planet Mercury might seize the star Rohiṇī in the sky. With his left hand he seized lotus-eyed Sītā by her hair and with his right hand by her thighs. When the forest divinities saw him, who, with his long arms and sharp fangs resembled a mountain peak racing along like Mṛtyu, god of death, they fled, overpowered by fear. Then, with a harsh rumble, Rāvaṇa's huge chariot appeared. It was fashioned through the power of illusion, had wheels of gold, and was harnessed with donkeys. With loud, harsh threats he then clutched Vaidehī to his side and forced her aboard the chariot. Caught in Rāvaṇa's grip and wild with despair, the illustrious Sītā screamed at the top of her voice, crying, "Rāma!" But Rāma was far off in the forest.

[21–25] Filled with desire for her who did not desire him, Rāvaṇa flew up, holding her writhing like the wife of a serpent lord. As the lord of the *rākṣasas* carried her off through the sky, she screamed shrilly like a woman gone mad, in agony, or delirious, crying: "Alas, great-armed Lakṣmaṇa! You have always sought favor with your *guru*. Do you not realize that I am being carried off by a *rākṣasa*, who can change his form at will? And you, Rāghava, you renounced all life's pleasures, everything of value, for the sake of righteousness. Don't you see me being carried off in defiance of all that is right? And surely, slayer of your enemies, you are the one to

discipline wrongdoers. Why then don't you punish so evil a creature as Rāvaṇa?

[26–30] "[z]Of course, the consequences of wrongdoing do not manifest themselves immediately. Time is a factor in this, as in the ripening of grain. And as for you, Rāvaṇa, Kāla must have robbed you of your senses to do what you have done. You shall receive a terrible punishment from Rāma, one that will end your life. Just see how Kaikeyī and all her kinsmen have accomplished their desire; since Rāma's lawful wife has been taken from him, that illustrious prince whose sole desire is righteousness. I call upon you, Janasthāna, and the blossoming *karṇikāra* trees to tell Rāma at once that Rāvaṇa is carrying off Sītā. And I respectfully salute you, Mount Prasravaṇa, with your flower garlands and massive peaks. Please tell Rāma at once that Rāvaṇa is carrying off Sītā.

[31–36] "And I respectfully salute you, Godāvarī River, alive with the call of *haṃsas* and *sārasa* cranes: please tell Rāma at once that Rāvaṇa is carrying off Sītā. And you too, divinities who inhabit the different trees of this forest, I bow in homage to you all. Please tell my husband that I have been carried off. And all you creatures that live in this place, I appeal to you as well for refuge, all you flocks of birds and herds of beasts. Tell my husband that the woman he loves more than life itself is being carried off, that Sītā has been helplessly carried away by Rāvaṇa. Once the powerful, great-armed prince discovers where I am—even should it be in the next world—he will come in all his valor and bring me back, no matter if it were Yama Vaivasvata himself, the god of death, who had carried me off. Jaṭāyus, you must tell Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa accurately about my abduction. You must report everything to them, omitting nothing!"

Sarga 48

[1–5] Hearing the commotion, Jaṭāyus, who had been asleep, looked up and quickly spotted Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī. Perched in a tree, the great keen-beaked and majestic bird—who looked like a mountaintop—then called out these fitting words: "Ten-necked Rāvaṇa, I am Jaṭāyus, the immensely powerful king of vultures, who keeps to the immemorial ways of righteousness and puts his trust in truth. Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, is king of all the world, the equal of great Indra and Varuṇa, and dedicated to the welfare of all people. The fair-hipped woman you now seek to carry off

belongs to him, the master of the world. Her name is Sītā, and she is his illustrious and lawful wife.

[6–10] “How could any king who keeps to the ways of righteousness defile the wife of another man, and a king’s wife at that, who is inviolable above all? It is a despicable thing, immensely powerful Rāvaṇa, to defile the wife of another. Put such a thought out of your mind. A wise man should not do what others would censure. One must consider the wives of other men as no less inviolable than one’s own. It is according to the conduct of their king, delight of the Paulastyas, that the learned decide questions of profit, pleasure, or righteousness that are not settled in the *śāstras*. For a king is himself righteousness, pleasure, and the ultimate repository of wealth; the king is the root from which all conduct springs, be it good or evil. You are evil and reckless by nature, foremost of *rākṣasas*. How could you possibly have secured your lofty position of power? It is as if a sinner had acquired a golden celestial chariot.

[11–15] “[aa]Indeed, it is true that one can never change one’s lustful nature. A noble person will not long dwell in the house of the wicked. Immensely powerful and righteous Rāma has never wronged you in your city or your kingdom. Why then are you wronging him? If Khara came to Janasthāna on Śūrpaṇakhā’s behalf and, overstepping all bounds, was slain by tireless Rāma, tell me now in all honesty, what wrong is Rāma guilty of that you should flee, carrying off this woman, the wife of the master of the world? You must release Vaidehī at once or he shall consume you with his terrible, scorching eye, just as Indra’s thunderbolt consumed the demon Vṛtra.

[16–21] “You do not realize that you have bound a venomous serpent in the hem of your cloak. You do not see that the noose of Kāla is wound around your neck. A man should bear only a load, my friend, that does not cause him to collapse. He should eat only the food he can digest without making him sick. For who would attempt a deed that can bring him no righteous merit, no worldly fame or glory, nothing but physical pain? I was born sixty thousand years ago, Rāvaṇa, and all that time I have justly reigned in the kingship of my fathers and forefathers. Although I am old and you are young and equipped with your chariot, armor, and your bow and arrows, still, you shall not take Vaidehī and go your way unscathed. You cannot carry off Vaidehī by force before my very eyes, any more than

one can refute the immutable text of the *vedas* by arguments tricked out with logic.

[22–27] “So stand a while and fight, Rāvaṇa, if you are such a hero. You shall soon be lying upon the ground, slain like Khara before you. For Rāma, this man clad in barkcloth, has often killed *daityas* and *dānavas* in battle, and he shall soon slay you in combat as well. But I myself must do what I can. Both princes are far away, and no doubt your hasty departure, coward, is from your fear of them. As long as there is life in me, you shall not abduct the lovely, lotus-eyed Sītā, beloved queen of Rāma. Come what may, I will serve the great prince Rāma, and Daśaratha too, even should it cost me my life. So stand, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, stand but a moment. Look, I offer you the hospitality of battle to the death. I will hurl you from your splendid chariot, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, like ripe fruit from its stalk.”

Sarga 49

[1–7] Although he was properly addressed in this way by Jaṭāyus, Rāvaṇa flew into a rage, and all his twenty eyes began to blaze like fire. His eyes red with rage, and wearing earrings of burnished gold, the impetuous lord of *rākṣasas* attacked that lord of birds. There then arose a tumultuous clash between them there in the deep forest like that of two thunderclouds clashing in the sky, driven by the wind. It was an amazing battle that took place between the vulture and the *rākṣasa*, such as two lofty, garlanded mountains might have fought when they still had their wings. The powerful night-roaming *rākṣasa* showered the vulture king with terrible broad-headed and iron arrows as well as sharp-tipped barbed arrows. But the vulture Jaṭāyus, lord of birds, withstood that hail of arrows, Rāvaṇa’s missiles, in battle. And that immensely powerful foremost of birds inflicted many wounds on his body with his sharp-taloned feet.

[8–13] Then, in a rage, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, eager to crush his enemy, took up ten terrible arrows, each one of them like the rod of Mṛtyu, the god of death. And with his bow fully drawn, mighty Rāvaṇa shot those keenly honed, terrible, spike-tipped arrows. Flying straight, they pierced the vulture. And yet Jaṭāyus, seeing Jānakī weeping in the *rākṣasa*’s chariot, ignored the arrows and attacked again. With his talons the mighty lord of birds shattered Rāvaṇa’s pearl-studded bow and all his arrows, and with his wings he battered his shield that blazed like fire. Unleashing all his power

in combat, Jaṭāyus then killed Rāvaṇa's team, those unearthly fleet donkeys with the faces of *piśācas* and breastplates made of gold.

[14–18] Next he smashed the great splendid chariot that could fly wherever one desired, along with its yoke pole, its sparkling wheels of gems and gold that made it gleam like fire, as well as its yak-tail fly whisks and its parasol as radiant as the full moon. Rāvaṇa, his bow shattered, his chariot gone, and his steeds and charioteer slain, fell to the ground, clutching Vaidehī to his side. When the creatures of the forest saw Rāvaṇa fallen to the ground from his shattered vehicle, they honored the vulture king, crying, "Well done! Well done!" with shouts of commendation. But as Rāvaṇa saw that the aged king of the birds had exhausted himself, he leapt up again in delight, still holding Maithilī. And yet, even as he set off in delight, clutching Janaka's daughter to his side, the vulture king Jaṭāyus flew up after him and spoke these words:

[19–23] "This is the wife of Rāma, whose arrows strike like thunderbolts. Can you not see, Rāvaṇa, you fool, that carrying her off will lead to the slaughter of the *rākṣasas*? You, your allies and kinsmen, your ministers, your army, and your retainers are gulping virulent poison just as a thirsty man might gulp water. Those who recklessly ignore the consequences of their acts quickly perish, and so will you. You are caught fast in the noose of Kāla. Where can you go to free yourself from it? You are like a fish once it has swallowed a baited hook for its own destruction. For, Rāvaṇa, the two unassailable Kākutstha Rāghavas will never forgive your assault upon their ashram.

[24–28] "A coward, you have done something condemned by the whole world in taking the path of a thief, not of a hero. So stand for a moment and fight, Rāvaṇa, if you are brave enough. You shall soon be lying upon the ground, slain like your brother Khara. When a man's death is near, he will perform some act of unrighteousness that leads to his own destruction, and this is exactly what you have done. And what man, after all, would do a deed whose consequences are sure to be evil? No one would, not even the lord of the world himself, the blessed self-existent Brahmā." And, having spoken these fitting words, the mighty Jaṭāyus hurled himself violently upon the back of the *rākṣasa*, ten-necked Rāvaṇa.

[29–35] Then seizing him with his sharp talons, he began to tear at him on every side, as would a mahout riding an unruly elephant. He tore at him

with his talons, sank his beak into his back, and ripped out his hair, armed only with his claws, wings, and beak. Again and again the vulture king tormented him, until the *rākṣasa* began to shake, his lips trembling with fury. Harried and beside himself with rage, Rāvaṇa struck at Jaṭāyus with his palm, all the while clutching Vaidehī tightly to his left side. But Jaṭāyus, the foe-taming lord of birds, got clear and with his beak tried to wrench apart his ten left arms. In a rage, ten-necked Rāvaṇa released Sītā and pummeled the vulture king with fists and feet. Then, for a time, there was a struggle between the foremost of the *rākṣasas* and the foremost of birds, both incomparable in valor.

[36–40] But as the bird persevered in his struggle on Rāma's behalf, Rāvaṇa drew his sword and cut off his wings, his feet, and his flanks. His wings severed by the *rākṣasa* of savage deeds, the vulture fell stricken to the ground, his life ebbing. Seeing Jaṭāyus, drenched with blood, fallen upon the earth, Vaidehī ran to him in sorrow as if he were her kinsman. The lord of Laṅkā stood watching as Jaṭāyus fell back to the ground, his body as blue-black as a storm cloud, his chest milk white, his noble power like a forest fire suddenly extinguished. But as the bird lay struck down to the ground and crushed before Rāvaṇa's onslaught, moon-faced Sītā, daughter of Janaka, took him in her arms and wept.

Sarga 50

[1–5] The overlord of the *rākṣasas* watched as the vulture, his life ebbing away, fell writhing to the ground, not far from Rāghava's ashram. But the woman whose face was like the moon, overlord of stars, began to lament bitterly when she saw the vulture king cut down by Rāvaṇa. And the lovely woman called out in terror, as if they were nearby and could hear her: "Whenever good or evil is about to befall a person, portents inevitably appear, signs such as the sight or screeching of birds. Therefore, Rāma, surely you must know that a terrible disaster threatens you? Surely, Kākutstha, it is because of me that birds and beasts are fleeing. Kākutstha! Lakṣmaṇa! Save me!"

[6–10] While Vaidehī was lost in helpless lamentation, her garlands crushed and her jewelry in disarray, Rāvaṇa, overlord of the *rākṣasas*, rushed up to her. She clung to a massive tree, twining herself around it like a vine while the overlord of the *rākṣasas* shouted over and over again, "Let

go! Let go!” As she, whom Rāma had left all alone in the forest, cried out, “Rāma, Rāma!” Rāvaṇa, like Yama, the ender of all things, seized her by the hair—thereby condemning himself to death. As Vaidehī was being assaulted, the whole world without end, including all things that move and do not move, was enveloped in a blinding darkness. And watching with his divine eye poor Sītā being assaulted, the majestic Grandfather Brahmā saw the outrage upon her and said, “What had to be done has been done.”

[11–15] The supreme seers who dwelt in the Daṇḍaka forest, their body hair bristling, trembled as they watched the assault upon Sītā. Even as she cried out, “Rāma, Rāma!” and “Lakṣmaṇa!” Rāvaṇa, overlord of the *rākṣasas*, took her and flew up into the sky. All adorned in ornaments of burnished gold and dressed in garments of yellow silk, the princess looked like a streak of lightning flashing from a storm cloud. Her yellow garment billowed out and made Rāvaṇa blaze all the more brilliantly, like a mountain engulfed in flames, while the lotus petals worn by beautiful Vaidehī, coppery and fragrant, were scattered over Rāvaṇa.

[16–20] Her golden silks, billowing out in the sky, resembled a cloud stained copper by the reddish rays of the midday sun. As she was clutched to Rāvaṇa’s side way up in the sky, her radiant face, without Rāma, no longer shone, like a lotus ripped from its stalk. It looked like the rising moon breaking through the tatters of a storm cloud. Her flawless and unblemished face, the color of a lotus calyx, with its smooth forehead and lovely hair, its fine nose and soft ruby lips, adorned with white, lustrous, and shining teeth, was now streaked with tears through her weeping. But still her beautiful, golden face, as lovely as the moon, was quivering before the lord of *rākṣasas*, and, like the moon appearing by day, it shone but faintly, without Rāma.

[21–25] Maithilī was golden skinned, and pressed against the blue-black *rākṣasa*, she resembled the golden star that glitters within a sapphire. Fair as a lotus, golden hued, with ornaments of burnished gold, the daughter of Janaka in Rāvaṇa’s embrace looked like a streak of lightning entering a storm cloud. The sound of Vaidehī’s ornaments made the overlord of the *rākṣasas* still more like a rain cloud, pure blue-black and now sounding as well. A shower of blossoms fell all over the ground, dropping from the crown of Sītā’s head as she was carried off. And driven by the force of his onrush, it went swirling back all over ten-necked Rāvaṇa.

[26–30] The cascade of blossoms came swirling back around Vaiśravaṇa's younger brother, like the brilliant wreath of stars that swirls around Meru, foremost of mountains. Vaidehī's jewel-studded anklet was shaken from her foot, and with a sweet jingling sound it fell like an arc of lightning. With her complexion pale pink as a tree's new shoot, Vaidehī lent a glow to the *rākṣasa*'s blue-black limbs, like a golden girth upon an elephant. In the natural radiance of her beauty, Sītā resembled a comet in the sky as Vaiśravaṇa's younger brother rose into the sky and carried her away. Her flame-colored ornaments were scattered, jingling, across the ground, falling like stars from the firmament when their store of merit has been exhausted.

[31–36] Shining like the moon, the overlord of stars, Vaidehī's pearl necklace slipped from between her breasts and fell like the Ganges descending from heaven. Their tops shaken by the wind of Rāvaṇa's flight, the trees with their flocks of various birds seemed as if they were crying out, "Do not be afraid!" [bb]With their lotuses overturned, their fish and water creatures frightened, and with sighs rising from their vaporous waters, the lotus ponds seemed to be grieving for Maithilī as if for a friend. From every side lions, tigers, deer, and birds swarmed together and went running after them in a fury, chasing Sītā's shadow. And as Sītā was being carried off, the mountains too, with their waterfalls for their tearful faces and their high peaks for their upraised arms, seemed to be weeping. At the sight of Vaidehī being carried off the majestic sun, maker of day, was as if despondent, his radiance dimmed and his glowing orb pallid.

[37–42] "There is no such thing as righteousness, much less truth, uprightness, or kindliness, if Rāvaṇa can carry off Vaidehī, the wife of Rāma," so all creatures, gathered in groups, seemed to mourn. Even the young of the forest creatures, their faces desolate, began to weep. And although their eyes were clouded by falling tears, they kept gazing upward in their fright. The divinities of the forest too were seized with violent trembling in every limb, to see the wretched plight of Sītā, to hear her loud wailing. Again and again, glancing down at the earth, Vaidehī cried out in her sweet voice, "Lakṣmaṇa! Rāma!" Her hair was disheveled, her auspicious bindi smeared, and yet she remained defiant as ten-necked Rāvaṇa carried her off, to his certain destruction. Maithilī was a woman of bright teeth and lovely smile, but now, as she was separated from all her

family, unable to see Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa, and oppressed with a crushing burden of fear, her face was drained of color.

Sarga 51

[1–5] When Janaka's daughter Maithilī saw that Rāvaṇa was flying up into the sky, she was stricken with misery and extremely terrified at the grave danger facing her. Her eyes red with rage and weeping, Sītā addressed the fierce-eyed overlord of the *rākṣasas* as he carried her off, weeping pitifully and crying: "Do you feel no shame at what you are doing, base Rāvaṇa, to steal me away when you knew I was alone and then to flee? Surely it was you, you vicious coward, who, wishing to carry me off, lured my husband away by means of someone taking on the form of a deer through the power of illusion. And you also struck down the one who tried to rescue me. How great the valour that you showed, lowest of *rākṣasas*! For I was not won by you after you proclaimed your name in battle.

[6–10] "How is it that having done so contemptible a deed as this, carrying off a woman left all alone, one who belongs to another man, you are not ashamed? Men throughout the world will speak of this despicable deed you have done, so savage and unrighteous. And you pride yourself on being brave. A curse upon that courage and strength you bragged about. A curse upon such behavior as yours, which will disgrace your House in the eyes of all the world. But what can be done when you are fleeing so quickly? Were you to stop for but a moment, you would not leave here alive. For if you were to come within the sight of those two princes, you, together with your whole army, would not live a moment longer.

[11–15] "For you could no more withstand the touch of their arrows than a sky-going bird can withstand the touch of a raging forest fire. Do yourself a favor, Rāvaṇa, a good and decent thing, and please let me go. For if you do not let me go, my husband will be enraged over your assault on me, and he and his brother will bring about your destruction. The very purpose for which you forcibly abducted me, you lowly wretch, will have been in vain. For being at the mercy of my enemies and denied the sight of my godlike husband, I could not long survive. Surely you are heedless of your own welfare and safety, just like a mortal who, at the hour of his death, gives himself over to perverse actions.

[16–20] “For all people on the point of death reject what is good for them. And I can almost see the noose of Kāla wound around your neck. And so, ten-faced Rāvaṇa, if you can feel no fear in the perilous position you are in, then clearly you must be seeing those golden trees. And soon, Rāvaṇa, you shall see the fearsome river Vaitaraṇī running in torrents of blood and the terrifying forest with sword blades in place of leaves. And you shall see the spiny *śālmalī* tree—its flowers of burnished gold, its foliage of precious beryl—all studded with of thorns of iron. For, pitiless Rāvaṇa, as you have so wronged the great prince, you shall survive no longer than if you had drunk poison.

[21–25] “Thus, Rāvaṇa, you are caught in the irresistible noose of Kāla. Where can you go to find safety from my great husband? In a mere instant, even without his brother, Rāghava slaughtered fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* in battle. How then could that powerful hero, skilled in all divine weapons, fail to kill you with his keen arrows when you have stolen his cherished wife?” Such and more were the harsh words Vaidehī cried out in pitiful lamentation, overpowered by grief and fear while still clutched to Rāvaṇa’s side. But even as the radiant young princess uttered those many anguished and pitiful words of lamentation, evil Rāvaṇa carried her off struggling and trembling in her every limb.

Sarga 52

[1–5] As Vaidehī was being carried off, she saw no one who might help her until she caught sight of five huge monkeys on a mountain peak. The large-eyed, fair-hipped Maithilī let fall her golden silk shawl among them, along with her lovely ornaments, hoping, “They might inform Rāma.” Thus, she unfastened her garment and let it fall with her jewelry among those monkeys, but ten-necked Rāvaṇa in his excitement was unaware that she had done so. The great, tawny-eyed bulls among monkeys looked up unblinking at large-eyed Sītā as she cried out. Across Lake Pampā the lord of the *rākṣasas* made his way, heading toward the city of Laṅkā, still clutching the weeping Sītā.

[6–10] Wildly excited, Rāvaṇa carried her off at his side, although she was his own death like a sharp-fanged, venomous serpent. He passed over forests and rivers, mountains and lakes, speeding through the sky like an arrow shot from a bow. Reaching the ocean, the lair of whales and dolphins,

the indestructible abode of Varuṇa, and the final recourse of rivers, he set out across it. As he carried Vaidehī over Varuṇa's abode, the waves heaved in agitation, and the fish and serpents were trapped deep below. Then celestial musicians hovering in midair raised a clamor, and perfected beings cried out, "This is the end of Rāvaṇa!"

[11–13] With Sītā struggling at his side—his own death in bodily form—Rāvaṇa entered the city of Laṅkā. Making his way through the well-ordered streets of the city, he entered his inner apartments through the maze of closely guarded gates. There Rāvaṇa deposited her, as the *asura* Maya might one of his illusory creations, and black-eyed Sītā sat lost in grief and utter confusion.

[14–16] Ten-necked Rāvaṇa then turned and spoke to some *piśāca* women, fearsome to behold: "See that no one, male or female, visits Sītā without my permission. Pearls and gold, raiment and jewelry, whatever she may want is to be given her, for such is my will. And let none of you speak one unkind word to Vaidehī, intentionally or not, if you value your lives at all." Having instructed the *rākṣasa* women in this fashion, the mighty lord of *rākṣasas* left the inner apartments.

[17–20] And as he pondered what to do next, he encountered eight immensely powerful *rākṣasas*, eaters of raw flesh. Seeing them, mighty Rāvaṇa, deluded by the boon he had been granted, addressed them, flattering their might and power: "Quickly now, take every kind of weapon and hasten at once to Janasthāna, once Khara's abode but now his final resting place. You must live there in Janasthāna, for it is empty now that the *rākṣasas* have all been killed. Trust in your virile power and put all your fears aside.

[21–25] "The vast army I had stationed in Janasthāna has been destroyed in battle—Dūṣaṇa and Khara among them—by Rāma's arrows. Because of this, I feel rage surging uncontrollably within me, such rage as I have never felt before. Rāma has aroused in me deep, ferocious enmity. And I must avenge the hostility of this enemy; for I shall find no sleep until I slay him in combat. Only after I have slain Rāma, the murderer of Khara and Dūṣaṇa, will I find contentment, like a pauper obtaining wealth. While you are living in Janasthāna, you must report on Rāma's activities and tell me precisely what he is doing.

[26–29] “You must all proceed with vigilance, night-roaming *rākṣasas*, at the same time making every effort to bring about Rāghava’s death. I have witnessed your power on the field of battle many times, and that is why I am dispatching you to Janasthāna.” Having received these generous compliments, the eight *rākṣasas* respectfully saluted Rāvaṇa, left Laṅkā secretly, and set forth together for Janasthāna. Rāvaṇa was overjoyed to have seized Sītā Maithilī, to have her in captivity, and to have incited the implacable enmity of Rāma. In his delusion, the *rākṣasa* rejoiced.

Sarga 53

[1–5] After having instructed the eight fearsome and immensely powerful *rākṣasas*, Rāvaṇa in his mental derangement believed that he had accomplished his goal. Pierced as he was by the arrows of Kāma, the god of love, his thoughts turned to Vaidehī, and he hurriedly reentered his lovely dwelling to see her. On entering his residence, Rāvaṇa, overlord of the *rākṣasas*, saw Sītā lost in grief in the midst of the *rākṣasa* women. Her face was drenched with tears, she was wretched and crushed under a heavy weight of grief. She was like a boat upon the open sea buffeted by gusting winds and about to sink; like a doe that has strayed from the herd and been brought to bay by hounds. Wretchedly she hung her head as the night-roaming *rākṣasa* advanced.

[6–10] She was overpowered by grief, wretched, and powerless, but the overlord of the *rākṣasas* forced her to come and see his dwelling, which was like a mansion of the gods. It consisted of an array of palaces and mansions with thousands of women in attendance; it was home to all kinds of birds, and all kinds of precious objects embellished it. There were pillars that ravished the eye, elaborately worked in burnished gold, crystal, silver, diamond, and beryl. War drums like those in heaven echoed through archways of burnished gold as he climbed with her up an elaborate golden staircase. It had magnificent windows made of ivory and silver, screened in by latticework of gold, and looking out onto row upon row of palaces.

[11–15] Ten-necked Rāvaṇa showed Maithilī the different quarters of his residence all brilliantly whitewashed and sparkling with precious stones. Sītā stood lost in grief as Rāvaṇa showed her the pools and ponds blanketed with flowers of every variety. After the evil-minded Rāvaṇa had shown her all his splendid abode, he said to Vaidehī, daughter of Janaka: “There are

three hundred and twenty million night-roaming *rākṣasas*, not including the aged and children, Sītā, and of all these awesome creatures I am master. Myriads stand at the bidding of me alone.

[16–20] “The reins of all my royal power are in your hands, and my life too, large-eyed lady. For you are more precious to me than the very breath of life. In my inner apartments there are many thousands of women. Be mistress of them all, beloved Sītā. Please be my wife. Enough! What need have you for further thought? Please accept my plea. Be gracious to me in my torment. Please give me your love. Laṅkā is surrounded by the sea, as far as a hundred leagues. Not even the *asuras* and the gods, including Indra himself, could assault it. Nor do I know of anyone in all the worlds, god or *yakṣa*, *gandharva* or seer, whose might is equal to mine.

[21–27] “What use have you for Rāma—that weakling deposed from his kingship, that miserable, short-lived ascetic, a mere man? Give your love to me alone; I will be a worthy husband for you. For youth is fleeting, timorous Sītā. Make love with me here and now. Do not imagine that you will ever see Rāghava again. He cannot possibly come here, fair-faced Sītā. For who is able to reach here even in his dreams? One could no more bind with ropes the wind racing through the sky, nor grasp the brilliant flame of a blazing fire. In all the three worlds, my beauty, I know no one strong enough to take you away when you are guarded by my arms. So, still damp with the water of the royal consecration, you must reign over this great kingdom of Laṅkā. And in perfect contentment you must make love with me. Through your sojourn in the forest you have expiated any misdeeds in your former lives. And here you shall enjoy the rewards of the righteousness you have practiced.

[28–31] “Here every garland is charged with heavenly fragrance, Maithilī, and the ornaments are only the finest. Come enjoy it all with me. And here is the sunlike flying palace called Puṣpaka, which I took by force from my brother Vaiśravaṇa. It is spacious, lovely, and swift as thought. Enjoy yourself in it with me, fair-hipped lady. But your clear, lotuslike face, a vision of delight—how pale it looks and sad, my fair-hipped beauty.

[32–35] “So enough of your reticence, Vaidehī, born of your fear of a lapse in righteousness. [cc]The love I have for you, my lady, will be sanctioned by the seers. See, I press my heads to your smooth feet. Be gracious to me at once, for I am your slave, utterly under your spell. But not

in vain are these words I speak through parched lips; not in vain does Rāvaṇa bow down his head to any woman.” Having thus addressed Maithilī, the daughter of Janaka, Rāvaṇa, having fallen under the power of fate, thought, “She is mine!”

Sarga 54

[1–5] When she had been addressed in this fashion, Vaidehī, although drawn with grief, was unafraid, and, placing a straw between them, she replied: “There once was a king named Daśaratha, an unshakable bulwark of righteousness, known far and wide as a man true to his promises. He had a son named Rāma Rāghava, who is famed for his righteousness throughout the three worlds. His arms are long and his eyes are large, he is my husband and my god. He was born into the House of Ikṣvāku, a prince with the shoulders of a lion and radiant splendor. And he is the one, together with his brother Lakṣmaṇa, who shall take your life. Had he been there to see your violent assault on me, you would now be lying in Janasthāna, slain in battle just like Khara.

[6–10] “Fearsome looking and immensely powerful though they are, all the *rākṣasas* you have sent forth shall find themselves impotent against Rāma, like the venom of serpents against Suparṇa. The golden arrows loosed from his bow will tear apart their bodies just as the Ganges’s waves do her banks. Even if you are invulnerable to the *asuras* or gods, Rāvaṇa, you have now aroused the bitter enmity of someone you shall not escape alive. Some life is still left you before powerful Rāghava makes an end of it, but how precious little you have, like a victim bound to the sacrificial post. If Rāma were merely to glance at you with his eyes blazing with rage, *rākṣasa*, you would be destroyed that very instant, utterly consumed.

[11–15] “For he who could destroy the moon in the sky, or send it crashing to earth, or even dry up the ocean, can free Sītā here. You shall lose your senses, your strength, your majesty, and your life. Because of what you have done, Laṅkā shall become a city of widows. This evil deed of yours, in taking me from the forest and away from my proper place beside my husband, will not bring you any pleasure. For my splendid husband has divine powers, and all the time he has been living in the desolate Daṇḍaka forest, he has trusted in his own might and feared

nothing. With hails of arrows in combat, he shall rob you of your power, your might, and this brash arrogance of yours.

[16–20] “For when, ordained by Kāla, the destruction of their lives is at hand, men grow reckless in their actions and fall under the sway of Time. The moment you assaulted me, lowest of the *rākṣasas*, Kāla overtook you, and it can only end in the slaughter of the *rākṣasas*, your women, and yourself. For an outcaste cannot desecrate an altar in the place of sacrifice, equipped with the ladles and other utensils, and sanctified by the vedic *mantras* of twice-born brahmans. This body of mine is devoid of sensation; throw it into bondage or have it killed. For I care nothing about preserving it, or my life either, *rākṣasa*. I will not subject myself to censure in the eyes of the world.” And when she had uttered these extremely harsh words there, Vaidehī Maithilī said nothing further to Rāvaṇa.

[21–24] Now, when he had heard Sītā’s harsh and hair-raising words, he replied with words meant to inspire terror: “Now you listen to what I have to say, my lovely Maithilī. If, sweetly smiling woman, within the space of twelve months, you do not come to me, my cooks will chop you into bite-sized bits for my breakfast.” Then, having spoken these harsh words, Rāvaṇa, who makes his foes cry out, spoke in a rage to the *rākṣasa* women: “Quickly send me the most fearsome-looking and deformed *rākṣasa* women, flesh-eating, blood-guzzling creatures. Have them humble her pride at once.”

[25–29] Women then appeared at his command, deformed and fearsome to behold. They cupped their hands in reverence to him and then surrounded Maithilī. Shaking and seeming to shatter the very earth with his heavy tread, the fearsome-looking king, Rāvaṇa, addressed them: “Take Maithilī into the middle of the *aśoka* grove. Keep her surrounded there and guard her closely. There, using both fearsome threats and gentle coaxing, break Maithilī’s will, as one would with a cow elephant in the forest.” Thus commanded by Rāvaṇa, the *rākṣasa* women seized Maithilī and went to the *aśoka* grove.

[30–32] That grove was filled with all kinds of flowering and fruit-bearing trees, the sort that produce whatever one wishes; birds flocked there too, singing sweetly at every season. But Maithilī, the daughter of Janaka, finding herself at the mercy of the *rākṣasa* women, was engulfed in grief like a doe in the midst of tigresses. They glared at her through misshapen

eyes and made brutal threats until she could find no peace; and when she thought back on her husband and her dear brother-in-law, she was nearly insensible under a crushing weight of grief and fear.

Sarga 55

[1–5] Meanwhile, after killing the *rākṣasa* Mārīca, who could take on any form at will and had been wandering about in the form of a deer, Rāma quickly headed back on his path. He hurried on, eager to see Maithilī, when from behind him a cry rang out, the ghastly cry of a jackal. Recognizing the jackal's ominous and hair-raising cry and uneasy at the sound, he thought: "Alas! It bodes ill when a jackal howls. I can only hope that Vaidehī is safe from the *rākṣasas* who might devour her. [dd]But what if Lakṣmaṇa heard the scream that Mārīca, in his deer form, cried out in imitation of my voice?

[6–10] "The moment he heard the cry, Saumitri would leave Maithilī—who would send him herself—and rush to my side. The *rākṣasas* must have joined forces in plotting Sītā's death. Mārīca became a golden deer to draw me away from the ashram. Then, once he had led me away and been struck by my arrow, he turned back into a *rākṣasa* and called out the words, 'Oh Lakṣmaṇa, I have been hit!' I only hope the two of them are safe without me to protect them in the forest. For I have aroused the *rākṣasas*' enmity by the events in Janasthāna. And now I see many terrible portents." Brooding in this way after hearing the jackal's cry and thinking how he had been lured away by the *rākṣasa* in the form of a deer, Rāma made his way back to Janasthāna, filled with dread.

[11–15] The birds and beasts approached and circled, keeping the despondent and downhearted prince on their left, uttering fearsome cries. Soon after seeing these most terrible portents, Rāghava spied Lakṣmaṇa coming his way, his usual radiance dimmed. A little way further on Lakṣmaṇa, distraught and sorrowful, met the equally distraught and sorrowing Rāma. But then Lakṣmaṇa's eldest brother began to rebuke him for coming and leaving Sītā alone in the desolate, *rākṣasa*-haunted forest. The delight of the Raghus took hold of Lakṣmaṇa's left hand, and though his voice was sweet as ever, he spoke words that were harsh and full of pain:

[16–20] "Oh no! Lakṣmaṇa, what a terrible thing you have done, dear brother, in leaving Sītā and coming here! I trust that she is safe. But I have

no doubt whatsoever, heroic brother, that the daughter of Janaka has been either lost or devoured by the forest-roaming *rākṣasas*. For so many evil omens have appeared before me. Tell me, Lakṣmaṇa, will we find Sītā safe and sound? It was a *rākṣasa* in the guise of a deer that lured me far off as I followed him. After much effort I somehow managed to hit him, and, as he lay dying, he turned back into a *rākṣasa*. I am sick at heart and wretched at what has happened, Lakṣmaṇa; my left eye is throbbing fitfully. Sītā no doubt is gone. For she has been carried off, dead, or has wandered off by some path."

Sarga 56

[1–5] When the righteous son of Daśaratha saw how downcast Lakṣmaṇa was, and how he had come into the desolate forest without Vaidehī, he began to question him closely: "Where is Vaidehī, Lakṣmaṇa? How could you have come here leaving her, who followed me when I set forth to the Daṇḍaka forest? Where is slender-waisted Vaidehī, the woman who shares my sorrow as I roam about the Daṇḍakas, driven from my kingdom? Where is Sītā, so like a daughter of the gods, my life companion? I cannot bear to live—even for a moment—without her, mighty Lakṣmaṇa. For without the daughter of Janaka, her complexion like burnished gold, I would not desire lordship over the whole earth, Lakṣmaṇa, or even over the immortal gods themselves.

[6–10] "I hope that Vaidehī whom I love more than life itself is still alive. Dear brother, I hope that my banishment will not have been for nothing. I trust that with me dead because of Sītā and with you out of the way, Saumitri, Kaikeyī will now be happy, with all her wishes fulfilled. I suppose that now poor Kausalyā, having lost her only son, will be forced to wait upon Kaikeyī, who will have achieved her every goal, dear brother, having both the kingship and her son. I am returning to the ashram to see if virtuous Vaidehī is still alive. If I find that she is gone, Lakṣmaṇa, I will end my life. For if I come back to the ashram and Sītā Vaidehī cannot speak to me once more with her smile, then I shall die, Lakṣmaṇa.

[11–17] "So please tell me, Lakṣmaṇa, whether poor Vaidehī is still alive or not. Or have *rākṣasas* devoured her because of your carelessness? Vaidehī is young and delicate and has never known suffering before. Surely she will be rendered desolate by the grief of her separation from me. It must

surely have frightened even you when that cunning, evil-minded *rākṣasa* cried out 'Lakṣmaṇa!' at the top of his voice. I suspect Vaidehī must have heard that voice just like my own and in her panic sent you off at once to find me. And you did the worst possible thing. By abandoning Sītā in the forest, you have given the cruel *rākṣasas* an opening for wreaking their vengeance. The flesh-eating *rākṣasas* are aggrieved over Khara's death; and doubtless those fearsome creatures have killed Sītā. Ah, I am truly drowning in disaster at every turn! What am I to do now, destroyer of your enemies? I fear what I am sure to find."

[18–20] Brooding in this way over fair-hipped Sītā, Rāghava hastened back to Janasthāna together with Lakṣmaṇa. Rebuking his anguished brother, feeling hungry, tired, and thirsty, distraught and sighing until his mouth was parched, he reached their dwelling and found the place empty. The heroic prince rushed into his ashram, searching every spot where they used to enjoy themselves. And then, as he stood in their dwelling, he was deeply afflicted and, his body hair bristling, he thought, "It is just as I feared."

Sarga 57

[1–4] Now, as the two of them were making their way back after Saumitri had arrived from the ashram, Rāma, the delight of the Raghus, in the anguish of his sorrow, questioned him at length. He asked him: "Why did you come without Maithilī when I left her alone in the forest only because I trusted you? As soon as I saw you coming without Maithilī, Lakṣmaṇa, my mind was deeply afflicted, knowing that the great evil it feared was true. My left eye was throbbing, my arm and heart as well, from the moment I saw you in the distance, Lakṣmaṇa, coming down the path without Sītā."

[5–8] Addressed in this fashion, Saumitri Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks plunged even deeper into sorrow, and he made this reply to the sorrowful Rāma: "It was not of my own volition that I left her and came here; it was only when urgently pressed by her that I came to you. Maithilī heard those words that sounded just like her husband crying out, 'Oh Sītā! Oh Lakṣmaṇa! Save me!' And once she had heard that cry of pain, in her love for you, Maithilī, weeping and beside herself with fear, said to me, 'Go! Go!'

[9–13] “Again and again Maithilī pressed me, saying, ‘Go!’ But in my full confidence in you I spoke these words: ‘I know of no *rākṣasa* that could present any danger to him. Remain calm, it is not as it seems; someone else has uttered that cry. For, Sītā, how could your husband ever utter such base and contemptible words as, “Save me!” when he himself could save the thirty gods? No, someone else, for some reason, must have imitated my brother’s voice and raised that strident cry of “Save me, Lakṣmaṇa!” So do not give way to agitation like some common woman. So enough of this yielding now to weakness, compose yourself, do not be anxious. For in all the three worlds there exists no man—nor will there ever be—who could defeat Rāghava in battle.’

[14–17] “But even though I spoke to Vaidehī in this way, she was in a disordered state of mind and, through streaming tears, made this cruel reply: ‘You have your wicked designs set wholly on me. But even if you bring about your brother’s death, you shall never have me. You followed Rāma here because you are in league with Bharata; and that is why you now refuse to help him when he is crying out so piercingly. You are a secret enemy who followed along for the purpose of having me. You have been waiting for Rāghava to give you an opportunity, so now you won’t go to him.’

[18–25] “When Vaidehī had addressed me in this fashion, I flew into a rage, and with eyes red and lips quivering in anger, I left the ashram.” But as Saumitri was speaking in this fashion, Rāma, beside himself with anguish, said: “Dear brother, you did wrong in coming here without her. You know full well that I am capable of defending myself against *rākṣasas*, and yet you left Maithilī just because of words she spoke in anger. I am not at all pleased with you for deserting Maithilī and coming here just because you heard a few harsh words from an angry woman. By all means, you behaved badly, in that when pressed by Sītā, you succumbed to anger and did not carry out my orders. The *rākṣasa* who took the form of a deer and drew me from the ashram now lies slain by my arrow. I nocked an arrow to the bow, drew it, and struck him as if in sport. He let out a cry of distress, and, relinquishing the form of a deer, he turned back into a *rākṣasa* adorned with bracelets. But no sooner did my arrow strike him than he assumed my voice and, with an anguished cry, uttered those dreadful words that carried far, and made you leave Maithilī and come.”

Sarga 58

[1–5] Now, as Rāma was hastening back, he felt a fitful throbbing below his left eye; he stumbled too, and a fit of trembling seized him. He saw many evil omens one after another and he said, “Can all be well with Sītā?” Racing along, he longed for the sight of Sītā, but when he saw that their dwelling was empty, his heart sank. Then, frantic, the delight of the Raghus wandered around the cottage grounds, searching everywhere. He gazed at the leaf hut, but without Sītā it looked to him like a lotus pond when Śrī, goddess of beauty, is gone and winter has ravaged it.

[6–9] The cottage grounds were empty and, with the trees rustling, they almost seemed to weep. The flowers had faded, the birds and beasts had fallen still, and the forest divinities had departed. The place had lost its splendor and looked ravaged, with its barkcloth garments and sacred *kuśa* grass scattered about, and its cushions in disarray. At the sight of all this Rāma began to lament again and again, crying: “She is lost or dead, carried off or devoured! Or else perhaps she is afraid and hiding, or has fled into the forest. Or perhaps she has gone to pick flowers or fruits? Maybe she went to the lotus pond or to the river for water.”

[10–15] And thus he went on searching but could not find his beloved in the forest. With his eyes red with grief he looked, in his grief, like a madman. Rāma raced from tree to tree, from river to river, and to the mountains, and, immersed in a murky ocean of grief, he lamented, crying to the trees: “O *kadamba*! Have you perhaps seen my beloved who was so fond of *kadambas*? Please tell me—if you know—what happened to my fair-faced Sītā. And you, *bilva*, please tell me if you have seen her. Her breasts are like your *bilva* fruits, her limbs as smooth as your young shoots, and she was clad in yellow silk. Or perhaps you, *arjuna*—she loved the *arjunas* as well—you can tell me about my beloved, whether the timorous daughter of Janaka is alive or not. And surely the *kakubha* must know about Maithilī, her thighs as smooth as *kakubha* limbs, for how lush its vines appear, its shoots and blossoms.

[16–20] “Since bees are buzzing about this *tilaka* here, foremost of trees, it must surely know about her who loved the *tilakas* so well. *Aśoka*, ‘free from grief’! Grief is tearing at my heart. Let me take on your name ‘*aśoka*’ too, by quickly showing me my beloved. And if, *tāla*, you have seen a woman with breasts like your ripe fruits, please tell me about her if you feel

any pity for me. *Jambū*! If you have seen Sītā with her complexion like river gold, if you have any knowledge of my beloved, do not hesitate to tell me. Or you there, you deer, do you know anything of fawn-eyed Maithilī? My beloved might be among the does, as her darting glances are so like theirs.

[21–25] "And you, elephant, I am sure you would recognize her if you had seen her, for her thighs are just as smooth as your trunk. Tell me, best of elephants. And if you, tiger, have seen my beloved Maithilī, her face like the moon, please tell me in full confidence; do not be afraid. Why are you running away, my lotus-eyed beloved? Surely I just saw you hiding behind that tree. Why won't you speak to me? Stop, please stop, my fair-hipped lady! Have you no pity for me? You never used to play such pranks. How can you ignore me? Your yellow silk clothes have given you away. Run all you like, fair-faced woman, for I have spotted you. But stop, if you have any feeling for me.

[26–32] "But surely, that is not she. The sweet-smiling girl must have come to harm—surely that is the only reason she would ignore me in my plight. Plainly the girl has been devoured by flesh-eating *rākṣasas* who tore my beloved apart, limb from limb, when I left her alone. That full-moon face of hers with flashing earrings, that perfect nose, those lovely teeth and lips, have all been eclipsed, I am sure of it, swallowed up in darkness. Even as she was lamenting, my beloved's soft, lovely throat, pale as the *campaka* flower and adorned with her lovely necklace, was devoured. And surely, as she flailed about, her arms, soft as a spray of leaves, were devoured, along with her bracelets, armlets, and trembling hands. I abandoned the girl only to have her devoured by *rākṣasas*, like a woman left behind by a caravan, and devoured despite having many kinsmen. Alas, great-armed Lakṣmaṇa! Do you see my beloved anywhere? Alas, my beloved, my beautiful Sītā! Where can you have gone?"

[33–35] [ee]Lamenting again and again in this fashion, Rāma ran from wood to wood—rushing on impulse from one place to scour another compulsively, or wandering like a madman—obsessed with the search for his beloved. Through forests and thickets, over rivers and hills and mountain cascades, he rushed about, wandering without rest. After he had traversed the vast, deep forest and explored the whole of it, his hopes of

finding Maithilī remained unfulfilled, and so he redoubled his efforts in searching for his love.

Sarga 59

[1–5] When Rāma, son of Daśaratha, found the ashram empty, the leaf hut vacant, the seats all in disarray, and not finding Vaidehī, he searched everywhere for her; he stretched out his lovely arms and cried out: "Where is Vaidehī, Lakṣmaṇa? To what region could she have gone? Who has carried off my beloved, or devoured her, Saumitri? Sītā, if you are hiding behind a tree to play a joke on me, enough of your joking. Come to me now, for I am overwhelmed with sorrow. For the fawns that used to play with you so trustingly, dear Sītā, are lost in worry and tearful without you.

[6–10] "Surely the great king, my father, will shortly see me in the other world, as I will be dead from the crushing grief of Sītā's abduction. And my father will surely say to me, 'How dare you—after I had given you an order and you had made a solemn vow—come into my presence before the appointed time?' And it is certain that in that other world he will curse me with the words, 'Damn you!' as a wayward, ignoble son who went back on his word. Oh where have you gone, my fair-waisted wife, leaving me here helplessly stricken with grief, miserable, and pitiful? You have shattered all my dreams, vanishing just as a good reputation leaves a dishonest man. Without you I shall die."

[11–16] Lamenting in this fashion in the bitter anguish of his sorrow, Rāma Rāghava longed for the sight of Janaka's daughter Sītā, but he could not find her. Then, failing to find Sītā, the son of Daśaratha sank down in despair like an elephant in deep mud. Then Lakṣmaṇa, with Rāma's best interests at heart, earnestly addressed him with these words: "Do not despair, my heroic, great-armed brother. You together with me must make continued efforts. For this forest has many lovely caverns in it. And Maithilī loves to roam the woods and is intoxicated with the forest. She must have gone into the forest or down to the beautifully flowering lotus pond. Perhaps Vaidehī went down to the river, where fish abound and the rushes grow thick. Or maybe she is hiding somewhere in the woods, aiming to frighten us, bull among men, or put us to a test. If you approve, majestic Kākutstha, let us at once exert ourselves to search for Janaka's daughter and

scour the entire forest where she is sure to be. Only do not let your mind give way to grief."

[17–20] Addressed with Lakṣmaṇa's heartfelt words, Rāma composed himself and began to search with Saumitri. The two sons of Daśaratha looked everywhere for Sītā, thoroughly scouring the forests and mountains, the rivers and lakes, the slopes of the mountain, its caves and peaks. But still they could not find her. After searching all over the mountain, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa, "Saumitri, I have seen not a trace of Vaidehī anywhere on this lovely mountain."

[21–25] And as Lakṣmaṇa, consumed with sorrow, wandered back through the Daṇḍaka forest, he answered his brother of brightly blazing energy: "My wise brother, you shall recover Janaka's daughter Maithilī as surely as great-armed Viṣṇu recovered the earth after having bound the *asura* Bali." But even though he was addressed in this fashion by heroic Lakṣmaṇa, Rāghava, his mind clouded with sorrow, in a wretched voice could only reply: "The whole forest has been searched carefully, wise brother, the flowering lotus ponds and this mountain as well, with all of its many caverns and streams. But I have seen not a trace of Vaidehī, who is dearer to me than life itself." And as he wretchedly lamented in this fashion, Rāma was momentarily overpowered by his agonizing grief over Sītā's abduction and fainted.

[26–29] Becoming weak in every limb, he sank down insensible, unconscious in the misery of his anguish, and heaving deep and burning sighs. Lotus-eyed Rāma sighed again and again and, in a voice choked with sobs, again and again cried out, "Oh my beloved!" Righteous Lakṣmaṇa, humbly and with his hands cupped in reverence, tried every possible way to comfort the brother he so deeply loved. But Rāma paid no heed to the words that fell from Lakṣmaṇa's lips, and he cried out over and over for his vanished, beloved Sītā.

Sarga 60

[1–4] Rāma was desolate and addressed Lakṣmaṇa in a tone of utter desolation: "Go down at once to the Godāvarī and look around. Perhaps Sītā went to the river to fetch lotuses." Thus instructed by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa set off again at a quick pace for the charming Godāvarī River. Then, after searching it with its many bathing spots, Lakṣmaṇa reported to Rāma: "I

cannot find her at the bathing spots, and she does not hear me when I call. I cannot imagine, Rāma, anywhere slender-waisted Vaidehī, the one relief of all our troubles, could possibly be."

[5–9] But upon hearing Lakṣmaṇa's words, Rāma, desolate and beside himself with anguish, went down to the Godāvarī River himself. Approaching her, Rāma cried, "Where is Sītā?" But neither the creatures there nor the Godāvarī River could tell Rāma that she had been carried off by the lord of *rākṣasas* who deserved only death. But although those creatures pressed the river, calling out, "Tell him about his beloved!" she did not tell him about Sītā's fate, though Rāma asked her so piteously. For the river, in recalling the appearance and deeds of evil-minded Rāvaṇa, would not tell him about Vaidehī out of fear.

[10–14] As the river had given him no hope of finding Sītā, and in the agony of not finding Sītā, Rāma said to Saumitri: "What unwelcome words shall I say, Lakṣmaṇa, when I meet Janaka and Vaidehī's mother and she is not with me? Where has Vaidehī gone, she who dispelled the grief I suffered while, deprived of my kingship, I subsisted on forest fare in the wilderness? How long the nights will seem to me as I lie awake, the princess gone from my sight, without the support of my kinsmen. I will roam through Janasthāna, by the Godāvarī, and over Mount Prasravaṇa here; I will continue roaming everywhere on the chance of finding Sītā."

[15–21] Now, as the brothers were conversing in this fashion, they spied a trail of flowers that had fallen upon the earth. At the sight of that shower of blossoms that had fallen to the ground, heroic Rāma was overcome with sorrow and sorrowfully said to Lakṣmaṇa: "I recognize these flowers here, Lakṣmaṇa: I gave them to Vaidehī in the woods and she put them on." Then, having spoken to Lakṣmaṇa in this fashion, that bull among men, great-armed Rāma, growing furious, cried out to the mountain, like a lion roaring at a puny deer: "Mountain! Show me the gold-hued, golden Sītā, lest I bring all your slopes crashing down. You shall be burned to ashes by the fire of my arrows and rendered forever uninhabitable, devoid of grass, trees, and even mere sprouts. Or, this very day, I will dry up this river here, Lakṣmaṇa, if it does not at once tell me about my moon-faced Sītā."

[22–25] As Rāma spoke thus in his fury, with his eyes seeming about to scorch everything, he spied on the ground the huge footprints of a *rākṣasa*. These were the winding footsteps of Sītā and the *rākṣasa*. His heart racing

in agitation, he said to his dear brother: “Look, Lakṣmaṇa, here are bits of gold broken off the ornaments belonging to Vaidehī, and here are her various garlands, Saumitri. And look, Saumitri, the ground is spattered everywhere with drops of blood sparkling like those bits of burnished gold.

[26–30] “Lakṣmaṇa, I believe that the *rākṣasas*, who can take on any form at will, have wantonly butchered Vaidehī, torn her limb from limb, or devoured her. Or perhaps, Saumitri, two *rākṣasas* quarreled over Vaidehī and had a fearsome battle here. Whose bow is this lying broken on the ground, dear brother? It is huge, studded with pearls, and adorned with burnished gold. And whose golden armor is this lying shattered on the earth, shining like the morning sun, and studded with bosses of cat’s-eye beryl? Whose parasol is this dropped on the earth with its handle broken, dear brother, a hundred-ribbed parasol festooned with heavenly wreaths?

[31–35] “Whose donkeys are these that have been killed in battle, huge, awesome creatures with golden breastplates and the faces of *piśācas*? And whose is this war chariot, overturned and broken, shining like blazing fire, the purifier, and fitted out with a battle standard? Whose arrows are these, splintered and scattered about, all adorned with gold, their shafts made long as a chariot axle to do their terrible work? Just see, dear brother, my hatred of the savage-hearted *rākṣasas*, who can change their shapes at will, has grown a hundred times more deadly than before. Poor Sītā must be dead, or must have been devoured or carried off into the deep forest. Her righteousness could not save Sītā as she was being carried off into the great forest.

[36–40] “[ff]Since Vaidehī has been devoured or carried off, which creatures in this mortal world or even which gods have been able to injure me? But then, any creature, Lakṣmaṇa, knowing no better, will despise a man of compassion, however heroic he may be, even if he be the creator of the worlds himself. The thirty gods themselves must surely think me powerless, because I have been mild, compassionate, and self-restrained, striving only for the welfare of the world. Just see how in my case, Lakṣmaṇa, a virtue has become an evil. But now I will efface it—as the great rising sun effaces the light of the hare-marked moon—in order to exterminate the *rākṣasas* and all beings. No *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, or *piśācas*, no *rākṣasas*, *kinnaras*, or humans shall be left in peace, Lakṣmaṇa.

[41–46] “Watch now, Lakṣmaṇa, as I fill the sky with missiles and arrows, leaving no space whatever for the creatures that move about the three worlds. I will bring the host of planets to a standstill, darken the moon, maker of night, paralyze both fire and wind, blot out the light of the sun, bringer of light. I will smash the mountain peaks, dry up the rivers and lakes, uproot every tree, vine, and shrub, and cause the ocean to vanish. If the gods do not restore Sītā to me safe and sound this very instant, they shall witness the full extent of my power, Saumitri. Not a single creature, Lakṣmaṇa, shall escape into the sky as the arrows loosed from my bowstring form a net without a gap. Behold now, Lakṣmaṇa, the devastation caused by my iron arrows, the birds and beasts driven wild and ravaged, the world plunged into chaos, from one end to the other.

[47–52] “Because of what happened to Maithilī, I will shoot my unstoppable arrows, drawn back to my ear, and thus rid the world of all *piśācas* and *rākṣasas*. Now the gods shall witness the power of my arrows when I loose them in anger. They shall see how far they carry when, my patience exhausted, I release them. No god or *daitya*, no *piśāca* or *rākṣasa* shall survive when in my rage I lay waste the universe. The worlds of the gods, *dānavas*, and *yakṣas*, as well as that of the *rākṣasas*, shall come crashing down one upon the other as the torrents of my arrows fly, smashing them to pieces. I will obliterate the boundaries of all these worlds with my arrows. For in my rage, I cannot be withstood, just like old age or Mṛtyu, Kāla or fate, which no creature has ever defied, Lakṣmaṇa, of this there is no doubt. So, unless they show me Sītā, the blameless Maithilī with her lovely teeth, I will overturn this world, mountains and all, its great serpents and humans, its *gandharvas* and gods.”

Sarga 61

[1–5] Thus anguished and tormented by the abduction of Sītā, Rāma was prepared to annihilate the worlds, like the fire at the end of a cosmic era. He kept glancing at his taut-strung bow, racked incessantly with sighs, and raging like Rudra himself when he sought to slay the victim at Dakṣa’s sacrifice. Seeing Rāma in a rage such as he had never seen before, Lakṣmaṇa cupped his hands in reverence and addressed him through a mouth gone dry with fear: “You have always been so mild in the past, self-restrained, and dedicated to the welfare of all creatures. Do not abandon

your true nature, yielding to rage. The splendor of the moon, the radiance of the sun, the movement of the wind, the patience of the earth—all this is constant; so too is your incomparable glory.

[6–10] “I do not know whose war chariot this was, with all its weapons and accoutrements, or who broke it and why. A battle must indeed have just ended here, prince; the place looks so dreadful, torn up by hooves and wheels, and spattered with drops of blood. But only one *rākṣasa* seems to have engaged in this fight, not two, foremost among the eloquent, for I find no footprints left by a great army. And you must not destroy the worlds because of one single being. Lords of the earth must be gentle and calm, and must mete out commensurate punishment. You have always been the refuge of all creatures, Rāghava, their ultimate resort. Which of them would ever look with approval upon the loss of your wife?

[11–16] “The rivers, oceans, and mountains, the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* would no more do you an injury than the pious would harm a man consecrated for a rite. What you must do, your majesty, is to track down the one who carried off Sītā, with me at your side, your bow in your hand, and the supreme seers to help us. We shall search the seas, mountains, and forests, all the dreadful caverns, the lotus ponds, and mountain streams. We shall search relentlessly through the worlds of gods and *gandharvas*, until we track down the one who carried off your wife. And afterward, if through conciliation the thirty gods do not restore your wife, lord of Kosala, then you shall do what the hour demands. [gg]If you cannot recover Sītā by peaceful means, by conciliation, tact, or diplomacy, only then, lord of men, should you unleash hails of your gold-fletched arrows, the equals of great Indra’s *vajra*.”

Sarga 62

[1–5] But having momentarily calmed Rāma, who was consumed with grief, helplessly lamenting, and insensible in the grip of profound stupor, Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri bowed down and pressed his head to his brother’s feet, trying to rouse him with these words: “Your birth was obtained by King Daśaratha only through performing great austerities and a great sacrificial rite, just as the immortal gods obtained the nectar of immortality. Your virtues had so won his heart that when he was separated from you, the king and lord of the earth became a god, as we heard from Bharata. If even you

cannot endure the sorrow that has befallen you, Kākutstha, what other ordinary and weaker person will ever be able to?

[6–10] "If in your sorrow you consume the worlds with your blazing energy, tiger among men, where are your subjects to find relief when they are in torment? This is the way of the world. Yayāti, son of Nahuṣa, ascended to the world of Indra, and then misfortune touched him. Then there is our father's *purohita*, the great seer Vasiṣṭha. A hundred sons were born to him in a single day, but all of them were later killed. And even the mother of the world, the goddess to whom all people pay homage, the earth herself—as we see, my truthful brother—is subject to earthquakes. Then too, the immensely powerful sun and moon, the two eyes of the universe, upon which everything is founded, are sometimes eclipsed.

[11–16] "Thus, bull among men, even the greatest beings, the gods themselves, cannot escape destiny, no more than can all other embodied beings. One hears that even among the gods, Śakra and the rest, misfortune no less than good fortune is to be found. You should not agonize, then, tiger among men. Whether Vaidehī is simply lost or has, in fact, been carried off, you must not grieve, blameless hero, like some ordinary man. Men like you do not grieve, Rāma, for they always see things as they truly are. However great their difficulties, their sight remains unclouded. Consider the matter clearly in your mind, best of men. For it is by applying their minds that the wise distinguish right from wrong. Without doing this, without carefully weighing an action and examining its advantages and drawbacks, the desired result is never attained.

[17–20] "In the past, my heroic brother, it was always you who advised me. Indeed, who would presume to advise you, unless it were Bṛhaspati himself, the preceptor of the gods? Your intellect is too profound for even the gods to fathom, wise brother. I am merely trying to rouse your reason, which grief has lulled to sleep. You must be aware of your powers, which are as much divine as human, bull of the Ikṣvākus. So direct your efforts to slaying only your enemies. What benefit would accrue to you, bull among men, in causing universal destruction? No, instead you must identify only your one evil enemy and eradicate him."

Sarga 63

[1–3] Rāghava, elder brother though he was, had no sooner heard the wise speech Lakṣmaṇa had uttered than he, who recognized its essential truth, accepted it. Great-armed Rāma then restrained his towering wrath, and, leaning on his shining bow, he said to Lakṣmaṇa: "What then are we to do, dear Lakṣmaṇa, where are we to go? Think of some way that I may see Sītā once again."

[4–7] Lakṣmaṇa then replied to Rāma, who was racked with anguish: "You must search here, throughout Janasthāna as it is infested with *rākṣasas* and densely covered with trees and vines. There are mountain fastnesses here, gorges, ravines, and dreadful caverns everywhere that harbor herds of different kinds of beasts. Together with me you must carefully search the abodes of the *gandharvas* and the places where the *kinnaras* dwell. Great and wise men like you, bull among men, are no more shaken in times of trouble than mountains are shaken by gusts of wind."

[8–11] Encouraged in this way by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma set out with him to traverse the entire forest, still enraged and with a fearsome, razor-headed arrow affixed to his bow. It was then that he saw illustrious Jaṭāyus, the bird huge as a mountain peak, where he lay fallen on the ground drenched with the blood of his wounds. At the sight of this creature the size of a mountain peak, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Without a doubt this is the one who has devoured Sītā, the princess of Videha. This is clearly a *rākṣasa* who roams the woods in the form of a vulture. And there he sits at his ease, after having devoured large-eyed Sītā. I will kill him with my fearsome, flame-tipped, straight-flying arrows."

[12–19] Having spoken in this fashion, Rāma nocked a razor-headed arrow to his bow and, as if shaking the ocean-bounded earth, rushed toward the vulture in a rage. But then, in an extremely desolate voice, and vomiting foaming blood, the bird addressed Rāma, son of Daśaratha: "She for whom you search the deep forest as though for a healing herb, long-lived Rāma, your queen, and my life as well, have both been taken by Rāvaṇa. I saw your queen as mighty Rāvaṇa was carrying her off, Rāghava, when you and Lakṣmaṇa had left her all alone. I rushed to Sītā's aid and gave battle, and hurled Rāvaṇa to the ground along with his smashed chariot and royal parasol. This broken bow is his, this is his shield, and this his war chariot, Rāma, smashed in the battle. But when I was exhausted, Rāvaṇa drew his

sword and cut off my wings, and then, taking Sītā Vaidehī, he flew up into the sky. You need not kill me, as I have already been slain by the *rākṣasa*."

[20–26] When Rāma heard his tale—a tale he cherished, since it concerned Sītā—he embraced the vulture king and then, along with Lakṣmaṇa, he wept. Rāma was overcome with sorrow as he gazed at him gasping for breath all alone in that trackless, inaccessible forest, and he said to Saumitri: "Expulsion from the kingdom, living in the forest, Sītā lost, this bird slain—misfortunes such as mine might burn up even fire, the purifier, itself. Were I to try to cross the surging ocean, surely with my luck even that lord of rivers would dry up. In all this world, with its fixed and moving contents, there exists no one more luckless than I, no one entangled in a net of calamity so vast as mine. Here now my father's friend, the aged king of the vultures, lies upon the ground, struck down because of my reversal of fortune." Having spoken in this way, Rāghava, along with Lakṣmaṇa, caressed Jaṭāyus again and again, showing him all the affection of a son for his father. Rāma embraced the vulture king as he lay there spattered with blood, his wings severed, crying, "Where is Maithilī, as dear to me as life itself?" He then fell to the ground.

Sarga 64

[1–7] As he gazed upon the vulture, who had been struck down by the savage Rāvaṇa, Rāma addressed Saumitri, his staunchest friend: "No doubt, this sky-going bird took pains on my behalf and that is why the *rākṣasa* struck him down in combat. Now he is about to lose his life, the hardest loss of all. But Lakṣmaṇa, some breath still remains in his body. He is gazing up, though feebly, and his voice has failed. Bless you, Jaṭāyus, if you can still speak, please tell me about Sītā, and how you yourself met your end. For what reason did Rāvaṇa carry off Sītā? What wrong have I ever done Rāvaṇa, that he should carry off my beloved? And Sītā's ravishing, moonlike face, what did it look like, foremost of birds? And what words did she utter at that moment? What powers does this *rākṣasa* possess, what does he look like, what feats has he accomplished, and where is his dwelling, dear elder? Please tell me as I am questioning you!"

[8–14] As Rāma lamented endlessly, Jaṭāyus, with a heavy heart, gazed up at him and replied in the faintest voice: "It was Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, who carried her off through the sky, resorting to his prodigious

power of illusion replete with winds and storms. When I was exhausted, my son, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* cut off my wings, and taking Sītā, the princess of Videha, he set forth, heading south. My breath is coming harder, Rāghava, everything is swimming before my eyes. I see the golden trees now and their hair consisting of *uśīra* grass! Rāvaṇa left with Sītā at the hour called Vinda, 'Finding.' Wealth lost at this hour is soon recovered by its owner. But he was unaware of it, Kākutstha, and like a fish that takes the hook, he shall soon perish. Do not be anguished over the daughter of Janaka. You shall soon kill the *rākṣasa* in battle and once again delight in Vaidehī's company."

[15–18] The vulture had been lucid while replying to Rāma, but he was nearing death; blood mixed with bits of flesh had begun to dribble from his beak. He said, "It was Viśravas's son himself, the brother of Vaiśravaṇa …," but with this, the lord of birds released his last breath. "Speak! Speak!" Rāma cried, cupping his hands in supplication, but the breath of life had left the vulture's body and passed into the sky. The vulture's head dropped to the earth, his legs stretched out rigidly, his body was convulsed and then fell back to the ground.

[19–25] Rāma gazed at the vulture, at his reddish eyes and lifeless corpse that looked like a mountain, and then, in the desolation of his many sorrows, he said to Saumitri: "This bird had lived in peace for many years in this abode of the *rākṣasas*, roaming here through the Daṇḍaka forest. He was born a long time ago and lived for many years, and now he lies here slain. For time indeed is inescapable. Just see, Lakṣmaṇa, this vulture who went to the aid of Sītā and was killed in my service by the still more powerful Rāvaṇa. On my account the lord of birds relinquished the great ancestral kingship of vultures, and laid down his life as well. You see, Saumitri, everywhere, even among those born as animals, can be found good creatures that follow the ways of righteousness, that are brave and provide a sure place of refuge. Dear brother, scorcher of your foes, my sorrow over Sītā's abduction has not been so hard to bear as the death of this vulture in my cause.

[26–30] "This lord of birds to me is just as worthy of reverence and esteem as the majestic and illustrious King Daśaratha. Saumitri, fetch some wood. I will kindle fire, the purifier, for I wish to cremate the king of vultures, who died for my sake. I will place him on the pyre, Saumitri, and

cremate him, the lord of the world of birds, slain by the savage *rākṣasa*. O noble king of the vultures, may you go to the state attained by sacrificers, the state attained by those who keep the sacred fires, who do not turn their back in battle, who make gifts of land. May you go to that very state on taking leave of me, and, when I have purified you, may you proceed to the highest of worlds."

[31–36] And having said this, and having placed the lord of birds upon the blazing pyre, righteous Rāma cremated him as sorrowfully as if he were a kinsman. Powerful Rāma together with Saumitri then went into the forest, killed several large, fat gazelles, and spread their parts about the bird. Illustrious Rāma carved off the flesh of the gazelles, cut it into chunks, and laid it on the lovely green grass as an offering to the bird. Rāma quickly intoned for him the prayer for reaching heaven, the one that twice-born brahmans recite for men who have died. Both princes then went down to the Godāvarī River and poured the funerary libation for the king of the vultures. Struck down in battle after accomplishing a glorious and most difficult feat, the king of vultures was purified according to the custom of the great seers and attained the holy state, which brings felicity.

Sarga 65

[1–4] After making the funerary libation of water for Jaṭāyus, the two Rāghavas set forth and went westward, scouring the forest for Sītā. Armed with bows and arrows and swords, the Aikṣvākas then turned south, striking out on an unbeaten path. It was nearly impassable, so densely overgrown, everywhere choked with shrubs and trees and vines, fearsome to behold. But the mighty princes forced their way along it, bearing southward, and soon they had traversed that vast and fearful wilderness.

[5–11] When they had gone some six miles beyond Janasthāna, the Rāghavas, of immense blazing energy, entered the dense Krauñca forest. It resembled a vast bank of clouds, and everywhere it seemed to be bustling with life. Lovely flowers of all colors could be found there, and flocks of birds and herds of beasts. Tormented by the loss of Sītā, the brothers began to search the woods eager to find her, stopping only now and then to rest. But then mighty Lakṣmaṇa of blazing energy, a man of courage, character, and honesty, cupped his hands in reverence and addressed his still mightier brother: "My arm has started throbbing powerfully and my mind is uneasy

and I see mostly inauspicious omens. So be prepared, my noble brother, and heed my sound advice. For to me, at least, these omens foretell some imminent peril. That bird there is a *vañculaka*, ‘the deceiver,’ most ominous of birds. His cries would seem to foretell our defeat in battle.”

[12–15] As they carried on their energetic search through the entire forest, a tremendous noise broke out that seemed to shatter the forest. The deep woods seemed altogether enveloped in wind; the noise coming from the forest seemed to fill the very heavens. Seeking the source of the noise, Rāma, along with his younger brother, came upon a huge, barrel-chested *rākṣasa* in a thicket. The two of them drew near, and there, facing them, stood the giant Kabandha, a creature without head or neck, his face set in his belly.

[16–21] His body hair was thick and wiry; he towered before them like a mountain, a savage creature like a black storm cloud and with a voice like thunder. And in his chest, darting glances, thick lashed, tawny, prodigious, wide, and terrible, was a single eye. Endowed with massive lips and fangs, he was licking his huge mouth while devouring enormous and fearsome bears, lions, elephants, and deer. Contorting his two fearsome arms, each one of them a league in length, he was seizing with his hands all sorts of animals: bears, deer, and flocks of birds. He drew in the leaders of herds of deer and tore them apart as he stood there blocking the path the two brothers were taking. The two withdrew then to the distance of a league and stared at the huge, ferocious, and terrifying Kabandha wrapped up in his own arms.

[22–26] But then, stretching out these prodigious arms a full league, he seized the Rāghavas both at once, squeezing them with all his might. Despite their own great arms and fiercely blazing energy, despite their swords and stout bows, the mighty brothers were caught and helplessly drawn in. Great-armed Kabandha, foremost of the *dānavas*, then said to them: “Who are you two bull-shouldered men, bearing such great swords and bows? By entering this fearsome region, you have offered yourselves to me as prey. State your purpose and your reason for coming here. With your bows and arrows and swords, looking like two sharp-horned bulls, you have entered the region where I dwell tormented by hunger—indeed, you have entered my very mouth, and your lives are forfeited.”

[27–31] When Rāma heard what the evil Kabandha said, he spoke to Lakṣmaṇa with a mouth gone suddenly dry: “We go from bad to worse, truly valiant brother. We have not found my beloved, but instead a dreadful calamity that may prove fatal. How great is the power of Kāla over all creatures, Lakṣmaṇa! Look at you and me, tiger among men, the two of us stunned by one calamity after another. Is not fate far too much for any creature to endure, Lakṣmaṇa? Mighty heroes, practiced in arms, can be overcome by Kāla and fall on the field of battle like dikes of sand.” Speaking in this fashion, the glorious, valiant son of Daśaratha, whose courage was true and firm, observing the stubborn courage of Saumitri, steadied his heart by an act of will.

Sarga 66

[1–4] When he saw that the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were entangled in the snare of his arms, Kabandha spoke these words: “Why did you linger, you bulls among kshatriyas, when you could plainly see I was tormented by hunger? Having lost your wits, you must have been designated by fate to be my prey.” At this, Lakṣmaṇa, racked with pain yet resolved to resist courageously, said what the moment and their safety demanded: “Very soon this disgrace to the *rākṣasas* will bolt us down. Come, let us cut off his massive arms at once with our swords.”

[5–8] Aware of what the time and place required, the Rāghavas took their swords and then cut off his horribly bristling arms at the shoulder. With a stroke the skillful Rāma cut off his right arm—the sword passed cleanly through—and mighty Lakṣmaṇa the left. His arms cut off, the great-armed *rākṣasa* collapsed, roaring like a thundercloud, making the heaven, the earth, and every direction resound. The *dānava* stared at his severed arms, engulfed in an ocean of blood, and wretchedly now asked the mighty princes, “Who are you two?”

[9–12] As Kabandha spoke in this way, the good prince, powerful Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks, told him about Kākutstha. “This is the heir of the Ikṣvāku dynasty. His name is Rāma, and all people have heard of him. As for me, know that I am Lakṣmaṇa, his younger brother. My brother, who has the powers of a god, was living in the desolate forest when a *rākṣasa* carried off his wife. It is in search of her that we have come here. But who are you, and how do you come to be hobbling about in the forest,

with your legs broken, your flaming mouth in your chest like a headless trunk?”

[13–15] And when Lakṣmaṇa had spoken to him in this way, Kabandha, remembering what Indra had once told him, was overjoyed and replied with these words: “Welcome, tigers among men! How fortunate at last to see you, how fortunate that you have severed my arms from their sockets. Listen now, tiger among men, as I tell you exactly how it was, through my evil conduct, that I came to suffer such deformity.”

Sarga 67

[1–4] “Once upon a time, great-armed prince, powerful and valiant Rāma, I was as handsome as the sun, or moon, or Śakra; I was endowed with an unbelievably beautiful form, and so, was famous throughout the three worlds. But I would take on this other colossal form, Rāma, to terrify the worlds. I would go from place to place striking terror into seers who dwelt in the forest. Then one time I enraged the great seer named Sthūlaśiras. For I assaulted him in this form while he was gathering different foods of the forest. Glaring at me, he called down this dreadful curse: ‘You shall have this ferocious and repulsive form forever!’

[5–10] “But I begged the enraged seer to set a limit to the curse provoked by my insulting him. And he uttered these words: ‘When Rāma cuts off your arms and cremates you in the desolate forest, then you shall regain your own grand and lovely form.’ You must know, Lakṣmaṇa, that I am the son of Danu and was once radiantly handsome. It was in consequence of Indra’s wrath that I acquired this form on the field of battle. I had propitiated Grandfather Brahmā through intense austerities. He granted me long life, but then madness took hold of me. The thought occurred to me: I have secured long life. What can Śakra do to me? I acted on it and assaulted Indra in battle. The hundred-jointed *vajra* that came hurtling from his hand drove my head and lower limbs right into my trunk.

[11–17] “I begged him to send me to the house of Yama, the god of death, but he refused, and told me, ‘The Grandfather has spoken; his words must prove true.’ Then I said to him: ‘But I cannot eat, the blow of your *vajra* has broken my lower limbs, my head and mouth. How then am I to live at all, let alone for so long?’ Śakra then provided me with those arms, a league in length, and fashioned a sharp-fanged mouth set within my paunch.

With those long arms I was able to pull in creatures of the forest—lions, tigers, elephants, deer—from all around me and devour them. And Indra also told me, 'When Rāma together with Lakṣmaṇa shall cut off your arms in combat, then you shall go to heaven.' You must surely be that same Rāma, bless you, for no one else could ever kill me, Rāghava, just as the great seer said. Now, I will give you some good advice, bull among men, and make known to you an ally, once the two of you have purified me with fire."

[18–23] When he had been told all of this by Kabandha Danu, righteous Rāghava spoke these words as Lakṣmaṇa listened: "Rāvaṇa easily carried off my illustrious wife, Sītā, when I was absent from Janasthāna with my brother. But I know only the *rākṣasa*'s name. We do not know what he looks like, where he lives, or the full extent of his power. It is only right to take pity on men who have been running in circles like this, helpless and sick with grief, and who are ready to be of service. So we will fetch dry branches broken off over time by elephants, prepare a huge pit, and cremate you in it, mighty Kabandha. But first you must tell us about Sītā, if in truth you know. By what route was she carried off, to what destination? Oh, do me this one great kindness!"

[24–31] When Rāma had addressed him thus with these splendid words, Kabandha Danu, a skillful speaker, said to Rāghava: "I do not possess divine knowledge, and I know nothing of Maithilī. But I will tell you who does know, once I have been cremated and have regained my true form. For you see, my lord, until I am cremated, I can acquire no knowledge of the mighty *rākṣasa* who carried off Sītā. For my vast knowledge was completely destroyed by the curse I brought upon myself when I acquired this form so repulsive to all the world. But come, before Savitṛ, the sun, his horses weary, sets, you must cast me into a pit, Rāma, and cremate me in accordance with ritual precept. Once I am cremated by you in a pit according to established usage, mighty prince, delight of the Raghus, I shall tell you of one who will know about the *rākṣasa*. You would do well to form a friendship with him, Rāghava. For he adheres to established usage, and, pleased, he will, acting swiftly, render you assistance. And there is nothing in the three worlds of which he is ignorant, Rāghava, since he once, for some reason, circumambulated all the worlds."

Sarga 68

[1–6] When Kabandha had finished addressing those two mighty lords of men, they went to find a cleft in the mountain and to kindle fire, the purifier. With huge flaming brands Lakṣmaṇa lit the pyre all around, until it was completely engulfed in flames. The purifying fire burned slowly as the body of Kabandha melted, for it was solid fat, like a lump of butter. But then suddenly, shaking the pyre, he ascended like a smokeless flame, a mighty creature wearing a pair of spotless garments and a heavenly garland. With a sudden rush he flew up in delight from the pyre, luminous and dressed in immaculate raiment, adorned with jewelry on every limb. Upon a luminous, glorious flying palace harnessed with *haṃsas* he stood in all his brilliance, shedding luster in the ten directions.

[7–10] And then, hovering in midair, Kabandha said to Rāma: "Rāghava, listen carefully to how to recover Sītā. There are six measures to bring to bear on every question, Rāma. But when the wick runs out on a man, he is hounded by adversity. Adversity threatens you. You and Lakṣmaṇa are all alone, and as a result this calamity, this assault upon your wife has befallen you. Therefore, best of friends, you must at all costs find a friend, for unless you do—I foresee it in my thoughts—you shall not succeed.

[11–15] "Now listen to what I am about to tell you, Rāma. There is a monkey named Sugrīva. His brother Vālin, a son of Indra, has banished him in a fit of rage. On the lofty mountain Ṛṣyamūka, in the beautiful environs of Lake Pampā, the steadfast, mighty Sugrīva has taken up residence with four other monkeys. You must go there at once, Rāghava, and forthwith secure him as your comrade, sealing your compact in the presence of a blazing fire to avoid any treachery. Do not be disdainful of the lord of monkeys. Sugrīva is very powerful and can take on any form at will. He now finds himself in need of help and always honors claims of gratitude. The two of you can at once accomplish his purpose. But whether or not his needs are met, he shall accomplish your purpose.

[16–22] "He is the son of Ṛkṣarajas but the flesh-and-blood child of Sūrya, bringer of light. He has been wandering along Lake Pampā in dread of Vālin ever since the latter wronged him. At Mount Ṛṣyamūka, where the forest dweller is residing, you must lay down your arms and secure the monkey as your comrade at once, pledging your word. For, through his skill, that elephant among monkeys has found out every dwelling place of

those creatures that feed upon the flesh of men. Nothing in this world happens without his knowing of it, Rāghava, tamer of your foes, wherever the thousand-rayed sun shines. With the help of the monkeys he will search the rivers and high hills, the mountain fastnesses and caverns, until he finds your wife. He will dispatch huge monkeys, Rāghava, in every direction to hunt for Sītā, who, separated from you, will be grieving. Whether your flawless beloved is on the very summit of Mount Meru, or has gone down to the depths of the underworld, Pātāla, that foremost of leaping monkeys will kill the *rākṣasas* and restore her to you."

Sarga 69

[1–5] Now, after making known to Rāma the way to recover Sītā, Kabandha, who understood the matter at hand, addressed him again, in words relating to that matter: "Here is a safe path, Rāma, leading to the west, where those pleasant flowering trees can be seen, *jambūs*, *priyālas*, *panasas*, *plakṣas*, banyans, *tindukas*, *aśvatthas*, *karṇikāras*, mangoes, and so on. Climb them or fell them by force to the ground, but you must taste their fruits, which are like the nectar of immortality, before you proceed. Then you must continue your journey through those lovely regions, from mountain to mountain and forest to forest, mighty princes, and you will come to the lotus pond known as Pampā.

[6–10] "It is free from pebbles, weeds, and pitfalls, Rāma, its bathing spots are level, its bed soft sand, and it is covered with beautiful lotuses and water lilies. *Haṃsas*, *plavas*, *krauñcas*, and ospreys flock to the waters of Lake Pampā, Rāghava, sending up their clear calls. The birds are not alarmed by the sight of men, so blessed are they in their ignorance of slaughter. And you will surely eat some, for they are plump as balls of butter. And there are fish in Lake Pampā, Rāma, *rohitas* and *vakratuṇḍas* and *nalamīnas*—choice, fleshy ones, and not too bony. Lakṣmaṇa, in his constant devotion to you, will shoot them with his arrows and bring them to you—scaling them, stripping off their fins, and roasting them on iron spits.

[11–15] "And while you are eating your fill of fish on a bed of flowers from Lake Pampā, Lakṣmaṇa can easily draw some water and give you a drink from a lotus petal. It is silvery, crystal clear water, deliciously cool, safe, and healthful, and charged with the scent of lotuses. There are also handsome, plump wild boars that roam the forest, making their lairs in

mountain caves. You will get to see them at Lake Pampā, best of men, when they come thirsting for water and begin to bellow like bulls. And when you take a stroll at dusk, you will forget your grief, Rāma Rāghava, viewing the cool waters of Lake Pampā, the flowers massed on the *tilaka* and *naktamāla* trees, blossoming water lilies and lotuses, the trees festooned with garlands.

[16–20] "But no man shall ever wear those garlands. For in that place the students of Matañga once lived, seers who practiced deep meditation. They groaned under the heavy burden of fetching their *guru* food from the forest, so that drops of sweat dripped steadily from their bodies to the ground. And these were turned into garlands by the ascetic power of the sages; they sprang up from the drops of sweat and can never perish, Rāghava. Even today in that very place their servant can still be found, Kākutstha. She is an ascetic named Śabarī, who has lived a very long time. She has always been devoted to righteousness, and once she sees you, godlike Rāma, you to whom all beings pay homage, she shall go to the world of heaven.

[21–25] "There, Rāma, situated on the western shore of Lake Pampā, you will find the site of that incomparable but hidden ashram. Elephants cannot come there and attack that ashram or surrounding woodland because of the provisions of the seer Matañga. In that forest grove like Nandana, the parkland of the gods themselves, filled with all sorts of birds, you will enjoy yourself happily. Now, Mount Ṛṣyamūka with its flowering trees is just to the east of Lake Pampā. It is a noble mountain fashioned long ago by Brahmā, very difficult indeed to scale, and with elephant calves standing guard around it. When a man goes to sleep on the peak of that mountain, Rāma, whatever treasure he may acquire in his dreams, he is sure to obtain when he wakes.

[26–29] "But no one of wicked deeds or any evil man may ascend it. For *rākṣasas* would seize him in his sleep and kill him on the spot. From there, Rāma, you can hear the loud trumpeting of the elephant calves that live in Matañga's wilderness and come to play in Lake Pampā. And there are furious bull elephants too, their hides dark as storm clouds, which wander in herds or all alone, running with streams of ichor. They come to drink the clear, cool, healthful water there, and then they withdraw, plunging back into the forests where they make their homes.

[30–32] "Now, in this mountain, Rāma, a large cave is visible. Its mouth is blocked by a boulder, which makes it all but impossible to enter. At the

front entrance to the cave there is a large and pleasant pool of cool water, and abundant roots and fruits can be found nearby. Trees of every sort surround it. It is there that Sugrīva lives with four other monkeys, though he sometimes stays on the summit of the mountain.”

[33–36] Having thus instructed Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the mighty Kabandha blazed there in the sky in all his garlands and radiance, shining like the sun, bringer of light. As Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa set forth, they called out “Farewell!” to illustrious Kabandha, who remained hovering nearby in the air. “May you achieve success,” Kabandha replied as he took leave of the joyful princes, ready to set forth himself. Then, cloaked in the majesty of a body that was like the sun, bringer of light, his true form that he had now regained, and gazing down at Rāma from the sky, Kabandha said one last thing, “You must secure that alliance!”

Sarga 70

[1–6] Heading west, the king’s sons set out on the road Kabandha had shown them, which led through the forest to Lake Pampā. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa observed the honey-sweet fruit trees densely clustered on the hillsides, but they pressed on, eager to find Sugrīva. After spending the night on a mountain slope, the Rāghavas, delights of their House, arrived at the western shore of Lake Pampā. On reaching the western shore of lotus-covered Pampā, they saw nearby the pleasant ashram of Śabarī. When they reached the ashram, a pleasant spot encircled by trees, they glanced about and then made their way to Śabarī. Upon seeing the princes, the perfected woman rose with her hands cupped in reverence, and then she grasped the feet of Rāma and of wise Lakṣmaṇa.

[7–8] Rāma then addressed the woman, an ascetic of austere vows: “I trust your holy practices thrive and that all obstacles to them have been overcome. I trust you fast and control your anger, great ascetic, that your vows of self-denial have been fulfilled. I trust the obedience you have shown your *guru* has been justly rewarded, soft-spoken lady, and that you have found peace of mind.”

[9–13] Questioned in this way by Rāma, the aged ascetic Śabarī, who was perfected and had won the esteem of all perfected beings, stood before him and replied: “When you arrived at Mount Citrakūṭa, those I had been serving departed and ascended to heaven upon flying palaces of

incomparable radiance. And those great and illustrious seers, wise in the ways of righteousness, told me, ‘One day Rāma shall come to this holy ashram of yours. You are to receive him, and Saumitri too, as guests. Once you have beheld him, you shall ascend to the highest imperishable worlds.’ On your behalf, bull among men, I have collected different sorts of forest food from where it grows on the banks of Lake Pampā, tiger among men.”

[14–16] Thus addressed by Śabarī, righteous Rāghava replied to the woman, who clearly had never been kept in ignorance: “[hh]From Kabandha Danu I have heard all about the power of those great ascetics. With your consent I would like to witness it with my own eyes.” When Śabarī heard the words that issued from Rāma’s mouth, she went with the two princes and showed them around the great forest.

[17–20] Then Śabarī said: “The place you see here, delight of the Raghus, so like a bank of clouds, where birds and beasts congregate, is known as the Forest of Matañga. Here, splendid prince, is where those purified sages, my *gurus*, would pay homage to the lakeside shrine with *mantras* and offer it sacrifice to the accompaniment of vedic *mantras*. To this altar sloping westward my honored *gurus* would bring flowers in hands trembling with weariness and make their offerings. You can see how, by the power of their asceticism, best of the Raghus, the altars have remained incomparably luminous until today, shedding their splendor in every direction.

[21–24] “Since the weariness brought on by fasting had enfeebled them, they could not go there themselves. Just see how they used the power of thought to bring the seven seas here all together. After bathing they would hang their barkcloth garments here on the trees, and even today they remain moist in places, delight of the Raghus. You have seen the entire forest and heard all there is to hear. I should like now to take leave of you and give up this body of mine. Now I wish to enter the presence of those purified sages to whom this ashram once belonged and whom I used to serve.”

[25–27] When Rāghava heard these words, so perfect in their righteousness, his face beamed with delight, and, together with Lakṣmaṇa, he replied: “You have my leave. You may go.” With Rāma’s leave she immolated herself in the purifying fire, and, resembling a blazing purifying fire herself, she went straight to heaven. Śabarī then, by virtue of her

meditation on the Self, went to the holy place where those accomplished great seers rejoice.

Sarga 71

[1–5] When Śabarī had gone to heaven through her own virtuous deeds, Rāghava paused to reflect in the company of his brother Lakṣmaṇa. And, reflecting on the power of those great sages, righteous Rāghava addressed Lakṣmaṇa, who stood at his service with single-minded devotion: "We have seen the ashram, dear brother, that belonged to those accomplished seers, a place of many wonders, where deer and tiger live at peace and birds of every species make their home. At the bathing spots of the seven seas we have bathed as custom requires and made offerings to the spirits of our ancestors. The misfortune that has hounded us has vanished, Lakṣmaṇa, and good fortune is at hand—it must be, since now my mind is once again filled with joy.

[6–10] "I know in my heart, tiger among men, that soon good fortune will reveal itself. So come, let us go down to lovely Lake Pampā. Not far from there stands Mount Ṛśyamūka, the place where righteous Sugrīva, offspring of Aṃśumant, the many-rayed sun, has been living with four other monkeys in constant fear of Vālin. I am impatient to meet the monkey chief Sugrīva, dear brother, since the search for my Sītā now depends on him." As Rāma was speaking in this way, Saumitri said this: "Let us hurry then and go, for my own heart is no less impatient."

[11–17] The supreme lord of the people then left the ashram with Lakṣmaṇa and went down to Lake Pampā. They gazed over the vast forest, everywhere luxuriant with flowers and tall trees, alive with the calls of *koyaṣṭis*, peacocks, *śatapatras*, *kīcakas*, and all kinds of other birds. Rāma felt a pang of desire at the sight of the different kinds of trees and ponds as he made his way to the last and finest of the pools of Lake Pampā. It was called the Pond of Matañga and was fed by water from far away. On reaching the pool, Rāma entered it to bathe. Rāma, son of Daśaratha, was sick with grief as he entered Lake Pampā through its covering of lotuses. There were pleasant groves clustered around the lake, brilliant with *tilakas*, *aśokas*, *puṃnāgas*, *bakulas*, and *uddālas*. Its water was full of lotuses but brimming and crystal clear, with turtles and schools of fish. The beaches were of soft sand, and there were beautiful trees upon the banks, with vines

growing twined about them like fast friends. It was the haunt of *kinnaras*, great serpents, *gandharvas*, *yakṣas*, and *rākṣasas*, a lovely treasure-house of cool water surrounded by all kinds of trees and vines.

[18–22] The pool was thickly covered with lilies, water flowers, and lotuses; and with the coppery red of the day lotuses, the white circles of the night water lilies, and the blue clusters of sky lotuses, it looked like a many-colored blanket. It was bordered by a grove of flowering mangoes, where the cries of peacocks echoed. As mighty Rāma, son of Daśaratha, looked at Lake Pampā with Saumitri, he began to lament from the keen desire he felt. Adorned with *tilaka*, *bījapūra*, banyan, and *śukladruma* trees, along with *karavīra* and *puṃnāga* trees in blossom, as well as *bhaṇḍīra*, *nicula*, *aśoka*, *saptaparṇa*, *ketaka*, *atimuktaka*, and various other trees, and also shrubs of *mālatī* and *kunda*, Lake Pampā resembled a beautifully adorned woman.

[23–26] Now, near its bank could be seen the mountain mentioned before, the one known as Ṛśyamūka, ornamented with veins of ore and many-colored flowering groves. It was the dwelling place of the powerful tawny monkey named Sugrīva, the son of great Ṛkṣarajas. He then said to the valiant Lakṣmaṇa, “Go now, bull among men, and find Sugrīva, king of the monkeys.” So, with his gaze fixed on the forest, Rāma, having gradually traversed the long road, reached his distant goal. And there he beheld Lake Pampā with its lovely groves and flocks of countless birds.

The end of the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*.

a Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
b Emendation: See PVR 3: 363.
c Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
d Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
e Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
f Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
g Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
h Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
i Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
j Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
k Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
l Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
m Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
n Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
o Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
p Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.

q Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
r Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
s Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
t Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
u Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
v Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
w Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
x Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
y Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
z Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
aa Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
bb Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
cc Emendation: see PVR 3: 363.
dd Emendation: see PVR 3: 364.
ee Emendation: see PVR 3: 364.
ff Emendation: see PVR 3: 364.
gg Emendation: see PVR 3: 364.
hh Emendation: see PVR 3: 364.

Chapter 4
The *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*

Sarga 1

[1–4] When Rāma arrived with Saumitri at that lake overflowing with lotuses, water lilies, and fish, his passions overflowed, and he lamented. As soon as he saw it, he trembled with rapture. Yielding to the power of love, he said to Saumitri: “Saumitri, see how lovely the forest is around Lake Pampā. Its crested trees are as splendid as mountains. But anguish still torments me, as I grieve over Bharata’s sorrow and the abduction of Vaidehī.

[5–11] “And yet this grassy plot, deep green and yellow, glistens brightly, carpeted with many-colored blossoms from the trees. With gentle breezes and with blossoms and fruits growing on the trees, this fragrant spring month is a time of heightened passion, Saumitri. And look, Saumitri, beautiful flowering thickets are pouring down showers of blossoms, like clouds releasing showers of rain. Forest trees of every kind, shaken by the force of the wind, are scattering blossoms on the ground among the lovely stones. In glades fragrant with honey, where bees hum, a gentle breeze is blowing, cooled by sandalwood trees. The mountains, with beautiful tall trees blossoming near their lovely crests, look as if their peaks were touching. And look at these *karṇikāra* trees everywhere in full flower: they are like yellow-robed men covered with gold ornaments.

[12–16] “This springtime, resounding with birdsongs of every kind, only inflames my pain, Saumitri, for I am without Sītā. Overcome by grief, I am tormented by love, while the joyous *kokila*, raising its voice, calls out to me. This *dātyūhaka* crying joyously by the lovely forest cataract makes me grieve, Lakṣmaṇa, for I am possessed by love. Birds united with their mates rejoice in flocks of their own kind, Saumitri. Delighted by the hum of bumblebees, they make a sweet sound. Overpowered by care and grief, Saumitri, I am tormented by that fawn-eyed woman and by the cruel breeze from the spring forest.

[17–19] "The peacocks circled by peahens on the mountain ridges heighten my desire, though I am already filled with desire. See, Lakṣmaṇa, how this peahen sick with love dances before her dancing peacock mate on the mountain ridges. Surely the peacock's beloved was not carried off by a *rākṣasa* in the forest. But for me, living without Sītā in this month of flowers is unbearable.

[20–25] "Consider, Lakṣmaṇa, in these forests rich with the burden of their blossoms now that the cool season has passed, how unfruitful the blossoms will be for me. As if to challenge one another, the joyful birds in flocks utter sweet cries, maddening me with desire. In the power of another, Sītā, my sweet-speaking, dark beloved with eyes like lotus petals, must surely grieve as I do. This gentle, cooling breeze, fragrant with flowers, feels like fire, the purifier, to me as I think of my dear wife. She is gone; but now the crow, that bird who once cried out while flying through the sky, is singing joyfully in a tree. The very bird who, flying through the sky, once foretold Vaidehī's abduction will now lead me to my large-eyed wife.

[26–31] "Listen, Lakṣmaṇa! Here in the forest the sound of birds warbling in the blossoming treetops increases my desire. And look, Saumitri, among Pampā's brightly colored rows of trees, red lotuses shine in the water like the newly risen sun. With its clear waters, filled with red and blue lotuses and fragrant water lilies, Lake Pampā is crowded with *haṃsas* and *kāraṇḍavas*. Always full of *cakravāka* birds, its forests enclosing bright glades, Pampā is resplendent with herds of elephants and deer seeking its waters. My eyes long to see the petals of the lotus buds, Lakṣmaṇa, for they are like Sītā's eyelids. Like Sītā's sighs, the captivating wind blows, passing through the trees after mingling with lotus filaments.

[32–34] "Look, Saumitri, there on the southern slope of Pampā's mountain stands the splendid flowering column of the *karṇikāra* tree. This king of mountains, richly adorned with veins of minerals, releases dust of many colors scattered by the force of the wind. And the mountaintops, Saumitri, seem to be all aflame with lovely *kiṃśuka* trees, leafless and in full bloom.

[35–41] "Here, growing on the banks of the Pampā, are dense and honey-fragrant masses of *mālatī* and *mallikā* jasmine, and blossoming *karavīra* trees; and *ketakī* and *sinduvāra* trees and *vāsantī* creepers in full bloom, and *mādhavī* creepers full of fragrance and *kunda* bushes

everywhere; and *ciribilva*, *madhūka*, *vañjula*, *bakula*, *campaka*, and *tilaka* trees, and also flowering *nāga* trees; and *nīpa*, *varaṇa*, and *kharjūra* trees in full bloom. And *aṅkola*, *kuraṇṭa*, *cūrṇaka*, and *pāribhadraka* trees; mango and *pāṭali* trees as well, and also blossoming *kovidāra*, *mucukunda*, and *arjuna* trees are seen on the mountain peaks; and *ketaka* and *uddālaka* trees too, and *śirīṣa*, *śiṃśapā*, *dhava*, *śālmalī*, red *kiṃśuka*, *kurabaka*, *tiniśa*, *naktamāla*, *candana*, and *syandana* trees and shrubs as well. Many beds of red and yellow have formed from the countless blossoms scattered on the mountainsides, Saumitri.

[42–46] "Look, Saumitri, blossoms are bursting forth on the trees, now that the cold has ended; for in spring, trees blossom as if to rival one another. And see, Saumitri, how Lake Pampā with its cool waters abounding in blue lotuses is sought after by *cakravākas*, frequented by *kāraṇḍavas*, filled with *plavas* and *krauñcas*, and visited by boars and deer. Pampā looks even lovelier with its warbling sky-going birds. Joyful birds of every kind seem to inflame my love as I think of my dark, lotus-eyed beloved whose face is like the moon. And look, there on the brightly colored mountainsides the deer are with their does, while I am parted from my fawn-eyed Vaidehī."

[47–49] Lamenting in this way, his mind assailed by grief, he gazed at the lovely flowing waters of beautiful, auspicious Pampā. Anxious and assailed by sorrow, great Rāma intently examined the entire forest with its waterfalls and caves. Then, after deliberating with Lakṣmaṇa, he set forth. Those two set out together for the mountain Ṛśyamūka where Sugrīva and his monkeys dwelt. But the tawny monkeys were terrified when they saw powerful Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa.

Sarga 2

[1–6] Now, when Sugrīva saw the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, those two great warriors bearing the finest weapons, he became alarmed. That bull among monkeys looked anxiously in all directions and could not settle down anywhere. Beholding those two powerful men, the terrified monkey could not steady his mind, and his heart sank. Righteous Sugrīva was deeply distressed as he reflected and weighed the alternatives with all his followers. As he watched Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with great anxiety, the lord of leaping monkeys Sugrīva said to his companions: "Surely Vālin has sent

those two to this inaccessible forest as spies. Disguised in bark garments, they have come prowling about here.”

[7–11] Then, when Sugrīva’s companions had seen those two excellent bowmen, they went from that mountain slope to another very high peak. Those tawny monkeys, leaders of the troops, having quickly approached that bull among troop leaders encircled that foremost of monkeys and stood in attendance. Leaping from mountain to mountain and making the mountain peaks tremble with their force, they reached a meeting place. And then all those powerful, leaping monkeys shattered the flowering trees that stood there on the mountain pass. Those great tawny monkeys went leaping everywhere on that big mountain, terrifying the deer, wildcats, and tigers.

[12–17] Assembling on that lord of mountains with their monkey chief, the companions of Sugrīva stood before him with their palms cupped in reverence. Then Hanumān, skilled in speech, spoke to Sugrīva, who was trembling with alarm, fearing some harm from his brother Vālin: “Bull among tawny monkeys, I do not see here fierce Vālin, whose cruel looks you fled with an anxious heart. My friend, I see no danger to you. Evil-minded Vālin, your wicked elder brother whom you fear, is not here. Ah, monkey, it is all too clear that you are a leaping monkey: you are too capricious to reach any firm decision. You have both intelligence and knowledge, so judge people’s true intentions before you do anything. For a king who lapses into folly cannot govern others.”

[18–21] When Sugrīva heard this entire fine speech of Hanumān’s, he addressed to him one finer still: “Who would not be afraid upon seeing those two who are like sons of the gods, long armed and large eyed, bearing bows, arrows, and swords? I suspect that those two excellent men have been sent as spies by Vālin; for kings have many friends, and one cannot trust them. And a man must recognize enemies who go around disguised; for untrustworthy people strike at the weak points of those who are trusting.

[22–26] “Vālin is shrewd about his objectives. Kings have many stratagems to destroy their enemies, and their schemes must be uncovered by ordinary-looking men. [a]You must go as an ordinary person, leaping monkey, and find out about those two from their various gestures, their appearance, and their manner of speaking. Observe their state of mind. If they seem well meaning, reassure them again and again by flattery and suitable gestures, making them well disposed to me. Then ask those two

bowmen their purpose in entering this forest, bull among tawny monkeys. Find out, leaping monkey, if those two are pure in heart. Their innocence can be discovered by their speech or by their appearance."

[27–28] Ordered in this way by the monkey king, the wind god's son resolved to go where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were. Saying, "So be it!" powerful Hanumān honored the words of the unassailable monkey who was so frightened. Then he went where mighty Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were.

Sarga 3

[1–3] Understanding great Sugrīva's words, Hanumān then leapt from the mountain Ṛśyamūka to where the Rāghavas were. When he arrived there, powerful Hanumān, that truly valiant best of monkeys, approached those two with gentle words. Giving up his own form for that of a mendicant, the monkey addressed them and duly praised them:

[4–8] "With your fair complexions, you ascetics strict in your vows resemble gods or royal sages. Why have you come to this place, frightening the herds of deer and other forest dwellers, and examining on all sides the trees growing on the banks of the Pampā? Who are you in these bark garments, best of men, strong, steadfast, bright as gold, enhancing the beauty of this river of auspicious waters, you splendid warriors with the gaze of lions, courageous and strong as lions, majestic, handsome, with the gait of fine bulls, with arms like elephants' trunks, great arms holding bows like Śakra's?

[9–12] "Your radiance makes this majestic mountain shine. You look like gods and are worthy of royal sovereignty. With eyes like lotus leaves, you seem to be warriors; yet you wear coils of matted locks. Resembling each other, you are like warriors come from the world of the gods, or like the moon and the sun come to earth by chance. You are broad-chested warriors, men with the look of gods, lion shouldered and powerful, like furious bulls. Why have you come to this place? Your arms are like iron clubs, long and well rounded, worthy of every adornment. Why are they unadorned?

[13–16] "I believe you are both capable of protecting this whole earth, complete with its oceans and forests and adorned with the Vindhya and Meru mountains. These two bright-colored bows, polished and brightly painted, adorned with gold, gleam like Indra's *vajras*. Your beautiful quivers are full of sharp, glittering arrows like terrible, death-dealing

snakes. Your two broad swords are very long and adorned with refined gold. They shine like snakes that have just shed their skins.

[17–21] “Why do you not speak to me when I address you this way? There is a righteous leader of the monkey troops named Sugrīva. Mistreated by his brother, this hero wanders the world in distress. Sent by that illustrious Sugrīva, king of monkey chiefs, I have come to you. I am a monkey named Hanumān. Righteous Sugrīva desires friendship with you. Know that I am his companion, the monkey son of the wind god. Wishing to help Sugrīva, I have come here from Ṛśyamūka disguised as a mendicant. I can go wherever I wish in whatever form I choose.”

[22–25] After Hanumān, that skillful speaker, had spoken this way to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, warriors skilled in speech, he said nothing further. Now, when he heard those words of his, majestic Rāma, his face showing delight, spoke to his brother Lakṣmaṇa, who stood by his side: “This is the companion of mighty Sugrīva, lord of monkeys. Just when I was wishing for him, he has come to me. Saumitri, subduer of foes, speak with kind words to Sugrīva’s companion, this friendly monkey skilled in speech.”

Sarga 4

[1–4] When Hanumān heard this agreeably worded speech, he was delighted that Rāma had some purpose, and he thought about Sugrīva: “Since this man has come with some purpose, great Sugrīva will acquire kingship. And this purpose is nearly accomplished.” Thoroughly delighted, that bull among leaping monkeys, Hanumān, skilled in speech, then replied to Rāma: “Why have you come with your younger brother to this terrible and inaccessible forest, adorned with Pampā’s groves and full of all kinds of savage beasts?”

[5–10] At these words, Lakṣmaṇa, urged by Rāma, presented great Rāma, son of Daśaratha, saying: “There was a glorious king named Daśaratha, devoted to righteousness. This is his eldest son named Rāma, famous among people. A refuge for all beings, this warrior, who has fulfilled his father’s command, is the most excellent of Daśaratha’s sons. Deprived of kingship, he came to live here in the forest with me. Self-controlled and splendid, he was followed by his wife, Sītā, just as at day’s end the splendid sun, maker of day, is followed by its own radiance. I am his younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa by name. I have become his devoted servant

because of his good qualities; for he is grateful, learned, worthy of happiness, very deserving and kindly disposed toward all beings. Deprived of sovereignty, he has taken refuge in forest life.

[11–16] “While we were absent, his wife was carried off by a *rākṣasa* who can change form at will, but we do not know the *rākṣasa* who stole his wife. There was a son of Śrī named Danu who through a curse became a *rākṣasa*. It was he who informed us about powerful Sugrīva. He said: ‘The heroic king of the monkeys will know your wife’s abductor.’ Then radiant Danu went happily to heaven. I have stated all of this truthfully to you, since you ask; for Rāma and I have both come to Sugrīva for help. Rāma, who gave away his riches and achieved the highest glory, was formerly a protector of the people, but now he needs Sugrīva as his protector. And since Rāma, overcome and tormented by grief, has come for refuge, Sugrīva and his troop leaders should be gracious to him.”

[17–20] Saumitri’s tears flowed as he spoke in this piteous way; and Hanumān, skilled in speech, made this reply: “The lord of monkeys must receive men such as you, for you are intelligent and have subdued both your anger and your passions. How fortunate that you have appeared! For his brother Vālin has become hostile toward him and stripped him of royal sovereignty as well. Greatly mistreated and robbed of his wife, he lives frightened in the forest. Sugrīva, the son of the Sūrya, bringer of light, along with us will help you in your search for Sītā.”

[21–26] After speaking in this way, Hanumān with his sweet voice gently said to Rāghava: “Let us go to Sugrīva.” In keeping with custom, righteous Lakṣmaṇa respectfully saluted Hanumān, who had spoken in that way, and said this to Rāghava: “This cheerful monkey, son of the wind god, is telling the truth. Sugrīva too has a purpose, so you have achieved your purpose, Rāghava. Hanumān is cheerful, his countenance is clear, and he speaks candidly. The warrior son of the wind god would not tell a lie.” Then Hanumān, the wise son of the wind god, went with the two Rāghava warriors to the king of the monkeys. And now the son of Pavana, the wind god, that most heroic monkey whose fame was widespread, whose valor was great, and whose mind was pure, set out for that best of mountains with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, rejoicing as if he had already accomplished his purpose.

Sarga 5

[1–7] Hanumān went from Ṛśyamūka to Mount Malaya and then announced the two Rāghava warriors to the king of the monkeys, saying: “This is wise Rāma whose valor is unfailing. This truly valiant Rāma has arrived with his brother Lakṣmaṇa. Rāma, son of Daśaratha, was born in the House of Ikṣvāku. Known for his righteousness, he is carrying out his father’s command. While this great, self-controlled man was living in the forest, his wife was carried off by a *rākṣasa*. And so he has come to you for help. His father gratified the god of fire with the *rājasūya* and *aśvamedha* sacrifices, giving hundreds of thousands of cows as sacrificial fees. He also protected the earth through his asceticism and truthfulness. On account of a woman, this son of his, Rāma, has come to you for help. These brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, desire friendship with you. Receive them and show honor to them, for they are both most worthy of respect.”

[8–12] When he heard Hanumān’s words, Sugrīva was delighted at heart. Freed from anxiety, he gave up his terrible fear of Rāghava. Then Sugrīva, lord of leaping monkeys, took on a very handsome human form and spoke in a friendly way to Rāghava: “You are valiant, instructed in righteousness, and kind to all. Your good qualities have been accurately described to me by the wind god’s son. For me it is indeed an honor and also a great advantage, lord, that you desire friendship with me, a monkey. And if such an alliance is agreeable to you, here is my outstretched arm. Take my hand in yours and let us make a firm pact.”

[13–18] Now, when Rāma heard Sugrīva’s eloquent speech, he was delighted at heart and grasped his hand with his own. Accepting cordial friendship, he embraced him tightly. Then Hanumān, subduer of foes, gave up his mendicant form and in his own form kindled a purifying fire with two pieces of wood. He honored the blazing fire, worshiping it with flowers. Pleased and composed, he placed it between those two. Then Sugrīva and Rāghava entered into an alliance by reverently circling the blazing fire. Delighted at heart, the tawny monkey and Rāghava could not get their fill of looking at each other. Afterward powerful Sugrīva intently spoke these words to Daśaratha’s son Rāma, who understood all things.

Sarga 6

[1–5] Sugrīva spoke: “My companion, the excellent counselor Hanumān, has told me why you have come to this uninhabited forest, Rāma. While you and your brother were living in the forest, both you and wise Lakṣmaṇa left your wife, Maithilī, daughter of Janaka, by herself. A *rākṣasa* who was longing for such an opportunity carried her off weeping, after he had first killed the vulture Jaṭāyus. You shall soon be released from the sorrow born of this separation from your wife. For I shall bring her back like the lost *vedas*. Whether she is down in the underworld known as Rasātala or up in the heavens, I shall bring back your wife and give her to you, subduer of your foes.

[6–10] “Know that these words of mine are true, Rāghava. Give up your grief, great-armed man: I shall bring back your beloved. I now realize that it was Maithilī I saw being carried off by a *rākṣasa* of cruel deeds. There is no doubt about it. Struggling in Rāvaṇa’s embrace like the bride of a serpent king, she was hoarsely crying, ‘Rāma, Rāma! Lakṣmaṇa!’ When she saw me and my four companions standing on the mountainside, she dropped her shawl and her bright ornaments. These we took and put away, Rāghava. I shall bring them. You should be able to recognize them.”

[11–16] Then Rāma said to Sugrīva, the bearer of good news: “Bring them quickly, my friend. Why do you delay?” At these words, Sugrīva, who wished to help Rāghava, quickly entered a deep cave in the mountain. The monkey took the shawl and the bright ornaments and showed them to Rāma, saying, “Look at this.” Then, as Rāma took that garment and the bright ornaments, tears covered his face as mist covers the moon. His face was stained with the tears he shed for love of Sītā. Crying, “Ah, beloved!” he lost his composure and fell to the ground. Repeatedly he pressed those fine ornaments to his heart and sighed deeply like an angry snake in its burrow.

[17–23] Through an unbroken stream of tears, Rāma saw Saumitri by his side and began to lament piteously: “Look, Lakṣmaṇa, here are the shawl and ornaments that Vaidehī let fall from her body to the ground as she was being carried away. As she was being carried off, Sītā must surely have dropped these ornaments onto grassy ground, and that is why they look like this. Tell me, Sugrīva, when you saw my beloved, who is dear as life to me, where was the fierce-looking *rākṣasa* taking her? And where does he live, that *rākṣasa* who has brought me such calamity? Because of him, I shall

destroy all *rākṣasas*. By carrying off Maithilī and angering me so deeply, he has opened the door of death and brought his own life to an end. Lord of monkeys, tell me about my enemy, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* who by deceit carried my dearly beloved wife away from the forest. I shall send him this very day into the presence of Yama, the god of death."

Sarga 7

[1–5] When sorrowful Rāma had addressed him in this fashion, the monkey Sugrīva cupped his palms in supplication. His voice choked with sobs, he tearfully said these words: "I know nothing whatever about this low-born, evil *rākṣasa*'s dwelling, his power, his valor, or his family. But I solemnly promise I will make an effort such that you shall regain Maithilī. Give up your grief, subduer of your foes. Satisfying you by killing Rāvaṇa and his followers, I shall soon exert my strength so that you will be pleased. Enough of this yielding to despair. Remember your own natural composure. Such faintheartedness is unworthy of a man like you.

[6–13] "I too have met with great misfortune through the abduction of my wife, yet I do not grieve in this fashion, nor do I abandon my composure. Nor do I grieve over her, though I am just an ordinary monkey. How much less should you, who are great, disciplined, and resolute? You should firmly hold back the tears that come. You should not abandon the fortitude demanded of the strong. In misfortune or loss of wealth or in mortal danger, the resolute man deliberates with his own judgment and does not despair. But the foolish man who always gives way to despair sinks helplessly in grief, like an overloaded boat in water. Here, I cup my palms in supplication. I beseech you out of affection: Rely upon your manliness. You must not let grief take hold of you. For those who give way to grief, there is no happiness, and their strength dwindles away. You must not grieve. It is out of friendship that I offer this counsel. I am not telling you what to do. But if you honor my friendship, you should not grieve."

[14–17] Gently comforted by Sugrīva, Rāghava wiped his tear-drenched face with the edge of his garment. And now lord Kākutstha, restored to his normal state by Sugrīva's words, embraced him and said this: "You have done what is right and proper for a loving and helpful friend to do, Sugrīva. Here I am, my friend, comforted by you and restored to my normal state. Such a friend is indeed hard to find, particularly at a time like this.

[18–23] “But now you must make an effort to search for Maithilī and the fierce, evil *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa. And you must tell me without reservation what I am to do for you. Everything will succeed for you, like crops in a good field during the rains. And you must regard as the truth those words that I proudly spoke, tiger among tawny monkeys. I have never spoken a falsehood before, nor shall I ever speak one. I promise you this; I swear it to you by truth itself.” Sugrīva and his monkey companions were delighted to hear Rāghava’s words, particularly his promise. When the wise tawny monkey Sugrīva, foremost of monkey warriors, heard the words of that mighty bull among men, he felt in his heart that his purpose was already accomplished.

Sarga 8

[1–5] Delighted by this speech, the monkey Sugrīva said these words to Lakṣmaṇa’s older brother, Rāma: “Undoubtedly I am favored by the gods in every way, because you who are endowed with every virtue have become my friend. Blameless Rāma, with you as my ally, I could surely win even the kingdom of the gods, not to mention my own, lord. Rāghava, I deserve the honor of my friends and relatives since I have obtained with fire as my witness an ally born in the House of Rāghava. You will gradually learn that I too am a friend worthy of you. But I myself cannot speak of my own good qualities.

[6–10] “The affection of great, magnanimous men like you is altogether unswerving, like the composure of the self-possessed. Good friends regard their own silver, gold, clothes, and ornaments as belonging to their good friends as well. Rich or poor, happy or unhappy, guiltless or guilty, a friend is the ultimate refuge. For the sake of a friend, one would sacrifice wealth, happiness, or even life itself once one has seen such affection.” “That is so,” said Rāma to Sugrīva, whose welcome words were spoken before wise Lakṣmaṇa, splendid as Indra Vāsava.

[11–14] Then, seeing that Rāma and mighty Lakṣmaṇa were standing, Sugrīva eagerly cast his eyes all about the forest. The lord of tawny monkeys saw a *sāla* tree nearby with lovely blossoms, full of leafy shoots and graced with bees. From that *sāla* tree Sugrīva broke off a beautifully blossoming branch with many leaves. He spread it out and sat down on it

with Rāma. Then, seeing those two seated, Hanumān as well tore off a *sāla* branch and made modest Lakṣmaṇa sit down.

[15–18] Then, with a sweet voice, his words agitated with excitement, the delighted Sugrīva spoke gently and affectionately to Rāma: "Mistreated by my brother, robbed of my wife, here I am, unhappy and tormented by fear, roaming this great mountain Ṛśyamūka. Wronged and shown hostility by my brother Vālin, I live terrified, sunk in fear, my mind distracted, Rāghava. You who give freedom from fear to everyone, please be gracious to me too, for I am oppressed with fear of Vālin and have no one to protect me."

[19–23] Addressed in this fashion, powerful Kākutstha, who was devoted to righteousness and knew what was right, smiled slightly and replied to Sugrīva: "A friend is helpful, an enemy hurtful. This very day, I shall kill your wife's abductor. For here are my sharp-edged, winged arrows of great speed, born in Kārtikeya's bed of reeds, decorated with gold, heron fletched, well jointed, and with very sharp points, like great Indra's thunderbolts or angry serpents. You shall see your enemy Vālin, who calls himself a brother but has wronged you so, brought down by my arrows, like a mountain torn apart."

[24–28] When he heard Rāghava's words, the army leader Sugrīva felt unequaled joy and cried: "Excellent! Excellent! Rāma, I have been overwhelmed by grief, and you are the refuge of the grief-stricken. It is because I regard you as my friend that I lament before you. For by offering me your hand with fire as witness, you have become my friend. I swear by truth itself that I value you more than my own life. It is because I regard you as my friend that I confidently express the inner sorrow that constantly torments my mind." But when with tear-filled eyes and tear-choked voice he had said that much, he could speak no further.

[29–32] Still, since Rāma was there, Sugrīva resolutely checked the rush of his tears, which had come as suddenly as the rushing of a river. Holding back his tears, wiping his bright eyes and sighing deeply, the powerful monkey addressed Rāghava once again: "Some time ago, Rāma, Vālin deprived me of kingship. Since he was the stronger, he drove me out with harsh words. He took my wife, who is dearer to me than life itself, and imprisoned my friends.

[33–36] "And that evil-minded creature is still trying to destroy me, Rāghava. I have often had to kill monkeys he has sent out. So when I saw you, Rāghava, I was suspicious and too frightened to approach. For when danger threatens, everyone is fearful. My only companions are these led by Hanumān. Nonetheless, I manage to survive even in these difficult circumstances. For these affectionate monkeys protect me on all sides. When I must go, they go along, and when I stay, they always stay with me.

[37–39] "What use is it to tell you the details, Rāma? This is the story in brief: my older brother Vālin, famed for his great strength, has become my enemy. With his destruction, my suffering would vanish at once. My happiness and even my life itself are bound up with his destruction. Grief-stricken, I have explained how my grief can be ended, Rāma. Happy or unhappy, a friend is always the refuge of his friend."

[40–45] When he had heard this speech, Rāma said to Sugrīva: "I should like to hear the true cause of this hostility. For when I have heard the reason for your hostility and determined your strength or weakness, monkey, I shall willingly do whatever must be done next. For when I hear how you were insulted, the strong indignation that stirs my heart swells, like the rushing water during the rains. Speak freely and in happiness while I string my bow. For the moment I loose my arrow, your enemy will be destroyed." When great Kākutstha addressed them in this way, Sugrīva and the other four monkeys felt incomparable joy. Then, with joy showing on his face, Sugrīva began to explain to Lakṣmaṇa's older brother the true cause of the hostility.

Sarga 9

[1–4] "My older brother Vālin, slayer of his enemies, was always highly regarded by our father and by me as well, in former times. Because he was the elder, the counselors placed him on the throne as the greatly respected lord of monkeys when our father died. And while he governed our great ancestral kingdom, I stood by humbly at all times, like a servant. Now it is well known that because of a woman there was great hostility in former times between Vālin and the first-born son of Dundubhi, powerful Māyāvin.

[5–8] "One night when people were asleep, he came to the gates of Kiṣkindhā. Roaring angrily, he challenged Vālin to battle. Now my brother

Vālin, who was asleep, could not bear it when he heard that frightful-sounding roar, and he quickly rushed out. As he left in a rage to kill that great *asura*, the women and I respectfully tried to restrain him. But the powerful monkey brushed all of us aside and went out. So out of affection I followed Vālin.

[9–11] "Now, when the *asura* saw from afar my brother and me taking a stand, he grew frightened and quickly ran away. And though he ran in terror, the two of us ran faster still, for the road was well lit by the rising moon. But the *asura* plunged into a great cavern in the ground that was hard to reach and covered with grass. The two of us reached the entrance and stopped.

[12–14] "When he saw his enemy enter that cavern, Vālin gave way to anger. With passions churning, he said these words to me: 'Wait here attentively at the entrance to this cavern, Sugrīva, while I go in there and kill my enemy in battle.' When I heard his words, scorcher of foes, I begged him not to go; but he made me swear by his feet and then entered the cavern.

[15–19] "An entire year passed while he was inside the cavern, and I remained at the entrance as that time went by. In my affection for him, I became anxious and believed my brother was dead, for I did not see him, and my mind feared the worst. Then, after a long time, I saw red foaming blood gush from the cavern, and I was in anguish. And to my ears came the echo of *asuras* roaring and the sound of my elder brother crying out. Now judging by these signs that my brother was slain, I blocked the entrance to the cavern with a rock the size of a mountain. Grief-stricken, I offered funeral libations for him and returned to Kiṣkindhā, my friend.

[20–24] "With effort his counselors got the truth from me, though I tried to conceal it. Then they assembled and together had me consecrated. But while I was lawfully governing his kingdom, Rāghava, back came Vālin, having in fact killed his enemy the great *asura*. Now, when he saw I had been consecrated, his eyes turned red with anger. He imprisoned my counselors and spoke abusively to me. Though I could have had him punished, Rāghava, my heart was restrained by respect for a brother, and I could not act against that evil creature. Honoring that great monkey, I greeted him respectfully as was proper; but he was not satisfied and would not pronounce blessings on me."

Sarga 10

[1–6] “Hoping to please him, I tried to appease my enraged brother, who had arrived so filled with anger, saying: ‘Fortunately, you have killed your enemy and arrived safely! For you, joy of the unprotected, are the only protector for me, who has no one to protect me. Accept this many-ribbed umbrella like a full moon on high and these yak-tail fly whisks, which I offer you. You alone are king and worthy of honor. I am just as I always was before. I restore to you this kingdom, which I merely held in trust. Do not be angry with me, gentle king, slaughterer of your enemies. I beg you with bowed head and with palms cupped in supplication. I was forcibly appointed to the rank of king by the assembled counselors and people of the city, lest the kingless country tempt someone.’

[7–8] “But though I spoke affectionately, that monkey abused me and said to me, ‘Damn you!’ and many other things of that sort. He brought together citizens and respected counselors, and in the midst of my close friends, he said the vilest things about me:

[9–13] “ ‘You all know how cruel, wicked-minded Māyāvin, the great *asura*, wishing to do battle, challenged me that night. When I heard his roar, I came out of my palace, and this fearsome brother of mine quickly followed me. But as soon as the mighty *asura* saw me in the night with a companion, he ran off terrified. When he saw the two of us running after him, he rushed, pursued by us, into a great cavern. When I realized that he had entered that great and terrible cavern, I spoke to this brother of mine who was plotting a cruel deed: “I cannot return to the city without destroying the *asura*. Wait at the entrance to the cavern while I kill him.”

[14–17] “ ‘Thinking that Sugrīva was standing by, I went into that formidable cavern. And while I was searching for Māyāvin, a year went by. But because I did not despair, I found and killed that fearsome *asura* enemy together with his kinsmen. Then the cavern became impassable, filled with a stream of blood flowing from his mouth as he roared underground. As I made my way out after killing my enemy, Dundubhi’s valiant son, I could not see the mouth of the cavern at all, for it had been blocked.

[18–20] “ ‘I cried out, “Sugrīva!” again and again. When there was no response, I was deeply distressed. But with repeated kicks I managed to break through. Then I came out that way and returned here. I was shut in

there by this malicious Sugrīva who, unmindful of brotherly affection, sought the kingdom for himself.'

[21–25] "And with those words the monkey Vālin, unperturbed, then banished me with nothing but a single garment. He drove me away and took my wife, Rāghava; and in fear of him, I have traversed this entire earth with its forests and oceans. Sorrowing on account of the abduction of my wife, I came to Ṛśyamūka, best of mountains, which for an unrelated reason Vālin cannot approach. Now I have told you the whole long story of our quarrel. Just see, Rāghava, the calamity that has befallen me though I am blameless. Hero, you grant freedom from fear to everyone. Please be gracious to me and punish Vālin, for fear of him oppresses me."

[26–29] Addressed in this way, the powerful knower of righteousness smiled slightly and began to speak to Sugrīva words consistent with righteousness: "These unfailing arrows of mine, sharp, angry, bright as the sun, shall fall on that evildoer Vālin. Sinful Vālin has violated all decency by taking your wife. He shall remain alive only as long as I do not see him. I realize from my own experience that you are plunged in an ocean of grief. But I will rescue you from it, and you shall attain all that you desire."

Sarga 11

[1–6] When he had heard Rāma's words, which increased both his joy and his courage, Sugrīva honored Rāghava and praised him: "With your blazing, sharp arrows, which can pierce vital organs, you could no doubt, when angry, burn up the three worlds, like the sun, bringer of light, at the end of the cosmic cycle. Listen attentively as I describe Vālin's manliness, heroism, and fortitude. Then afterward do what must be done. Before the sun rises, Vālin strides from the western to the eastern ocean and from the southern to the northern ocean without tiring. Mighty Vālin climbs to the tops of mountains, swiftly tosses even their huge peaks upward, and then catches them again. And in forests, Vālin displays his strength by swiftly shattering all sorts of mighty trees.

[7–9] "Now there was once a mighty buffalo demon named Dundubhi, big as the peak of Mount Kailāsa, who possessed the strength of a thousand elephants. Corrupted by pride in his might and deluded by a boon granted to him, that gigantic creature went to the ocean, the lord of rivers. Confronting

the billowing sea with its hoard of gems, he said to that great ocean, ‘Come, fight with me!’

[10–13] “Then, king, the righteous mighty ocean rose up and said these words to that *asura* who was driven by fate: ‘I cannot do battle with you, who are skillful in battle. But listen; I shall name one who will give you battle. In a great forest stands the king of mountains, the father-in-law of Śañkara, the supreme refuge of ascetics known as Himalaya. With his caverns and cascades, with his many caves and waterfalls, he is capable of giving you unrivaled satisfaction in battle.’

[14–19] “Considering the ocean to be frightened, that best of *asuras* went like an arrow loosed from a bow to the forest of the mountain Himalaya. With a roar Dundubhi hurled from that mountain to the earth many white boulders, as big as the king of elephants. Then gentle Himalaya, in the form of a friendly-looking white cloud resting on his own summit, spoke these words: ‘Dundubhi, you are devoted to righteousness. You should not trouble me, the refuge of ascetics, for I am unskilled in warfare.’ Hearing this speech of the wise king of mountains, Dundubhi, red-eyed with anger, spoke these words: ‘If you are incapable of battle or paralyzed through fear of me, name someone who can give battle to me today, for I am eager to fight.’

[20–23] “When righteous Himalaya, skilled in speech, heard that unprecedented speech, he replied in anger to that best of *asuras*: ‘In Kiṣkindhā, unequaled in splendor, there dwells a wise and majestic monkey named Vālin, whose prowess is equal to Śakra’s. Wise and skilled in battle, he is capable of offering you great single combat, just as Indra Vāsava did to Namuci. Go to him quickly if you desire battle now, for he is invincible and always heroic in warfare.’

[24–30] “When he heard Himalaya’s words, Dundubhi went in a fury to Vālin’s city Kiṣkindhā. Taking the form of a terrifying, sharp-horned buffalo, he looked like a huge cloud laden with rain in the monsoon sky. Then mighty Dundubhi reached Kiṣkindhā’s gate and roared like a great kettledrum, making the earth tremble; and he broke the trees growing nearby, tearing up the ground with his hooves, and boldly slashing the gate with his horns, like a two-tusked elephant. Vālin, who was in the women’s quarters, could not bear hearing the noise, so out he rushed with his women, like the moon appearing with the stars. Vālin, lord of all the tawny forest-

roaming monkeys, addressed Dundubhi in measured and clearly articulated words: ‘Why do you roar and besiege this city gate? I know you, mighty Dundubhi. Protect your own life!’

[31–36] “When he heard the speech of the wise monkey king, Dundubhi, red-eyed with anger, said these words: ‘Warrior, you should not make speeches in front of women. Give me battle. Then I shall know your strength. Or perhaps I should restrain my anger for tonight? Let us agree on sunrise as the limit to your free enjoyment of love, monkey. For whoever kills anyone who is drunk or heedless or asleep or without weapons or, like you, completely stupefied by passion is regarded in this world as the murderer of an unborn child.’ Laughing quietly, Vālin then dismissed Tārā and all the other women and angrily said to that best of *asuras*: ‘Unless you are afraid of battle, don’t think that I am drunk. Consider my intoxication as a warrior’s customary drinking before our encounter.’

[37–40] “With these words, angry Vālin put on a gold necklace he had received from great Indra, his father, and stood ready for battle. Vālin seized that mountainous Dundubhi by his two horns, threw him to the ground, and roared loudly. In that mortal conflict, Dundubhi was then crushed. As he was flung to the ground, blood flowed from his ears, and the gigantic *asura* fell to earth, dead. With both arms, impetuous Vālin lifted that *asura*, now without life or consciousness, and with one quick toss hurled him a league away.

[41–44] “As he was violently flung away, drops of blood from his mouth were scattered by the wind and fell on Matañga’s hermitage. Seeing the drops of blood fall there, the sage pronounced a terrible curse on Vālin for throwing the body: ‘He must not enter here. It will be death for him to enter.’ With palms cupped in reverence, Vālin approached the great seer and begged forgiveness. Frightened by the threat of that curse, lord of men, that tawny monkey therefore refuses to enter here, or even to look at the great mountain Ṛśyamūka.

[45–49] “Knowing that he cannot enter here, Rāma, I roam this great forest with my ministers, free from care. Here, one can see the skeleton of that Dundubhi, high as a mountain, hurled away by Vālin in the exuberance of his strength. And here are seven thick *sāla* trees with branches hanging down, any one of which Vālin with his strength could pierce through with an arrow. I have made clear to you his unequaled strength, Rāma. How then

will you be able to kill Vālin in battle, king? If, however, you could split these *sāla* trees with a single arrow, then, great-armed man, I would know you were capable of killing Vālin.”

[50–52] When great-armed Rāghava heard those words of great Sugrīva, he easily lifted Dundubhi’s body with his big toe and hurled it ten leagues. And when Sugrīva saw the body flung away, he spoke these reasonable words to Rāma in Lakṣmaṇa’s presence: “When the body was thrown before, my friend, it was fresh and had flesh and blood. But now it has become like straw, light and without flesh, Rāghava. So in this case, it is impossible to know whether your strength or Vālin’s is superior.”

Sarga 12

[1–6] When he heard those words so well spoken by Sugrīva, mighty Rāma took up his bow to inspire confidence. The bestower of honor seized his terrible bow and a single arrow, took aim at the *sāla* trees, and shot, filling every quarter with the sound of his bowstring. Released by powerful Rāma, the gold-adorned arrow split the seven *sāla* trees, passed through the mountaintop, and entered the earth. In an instant, the swift arrow split the earth, entered it, flew out again, and quickly returned to its quiver. When that bull among monkeys saw those seven *sāla* trees pierced by the force of Rāma’s arrow, he was greatly amazed. Highly pleased, Sugrīva cupped his palms in reverence before Rāghava and then threw himself down with his head to the ground, so that his ornaments hung down.

[7–11] In his delight at that feat, Sugrīva spoke to the heroic knower of righteousness, foremost of those skilled in every weapon, who was standing there: “My lord, bull among men, with your arrows you are capable of killing in battle all the gods, including Indra, to say nothing of Vālin. Who can stand in the forefront of battle before you, Kākutstha, you, who—with a single arrow—split open seven great *sāla* trees, the mountain, and the earth? Now my sorrow is gone, now my joy is supreme, for I have gained you, the equal of great Indra and Varuṇa, as my close friend. As a favor to me, Kākutstha, you must this very day kill Vālin, my enemy in the form of a brother. See, I cup my hands in reverence.”

[12–16] Then wise Rāma embraced handsome Sugrīva and with Lakṣmaṇa’s approval responded in these words: “Let us go from here to Kiṣkindhā. You, Sugrīva, go swiftly before us. And when you get there,

challenge Vālin, that brother in name only." Proceeding quickly to Vālin's city Kiṣkindhā, they all stopped in the dense forest, concealing themselves behind trees. Girding his loins, Sugrīva, as a challenge to Vālin, bellowed horribly, seeming to split the sky with his furious roaring. Angered at hearing his brother's roars, mighty Vālin, enraged, rushed out, like the sun, bringer of light, from behind the slope of the western mountain.

[17–20] Then a tumultuous battle took place between Vālin and Sugrīva, like a dreadful clash in the sky between the planets Mercury and Mars. In the conflict, the two brothers, beside themselves with rage, struck each other with fists like thunderbolts and with palms like lightning. Then, bow in hand, Rāma looked carefully at those two warriors who were as similar to each other as the twin gods, the Aśvins. And since he could not distinguish Sugrīva from Vālin, Rāghava could not make up his mind to loose his deadly arrow.

[21–24] Meanwhile, routed by Vālin, Sugrīva did not see his protector, Rāghava, so he fled to Ṛśyamūka. Exhausted, his body spattered with blood, battered by blows, he fled into the great forest, angrily pursued by Vālin. But when mighty Vālin saw him enter that forest, he turned back in fear of the curse, saying: "You have escaped, then!" Rāghava too, with his brother and Hanumān as well, came back to that same forest where the monkey Sugrīva was.

[25–27] When he saw Rāma arriving with Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva was ashamed. With his eyes fixed on the ground, he spoke dejectedly: "First you showed me your prowess and said I should challenge my enemy. Then you let him beat me. Why do you act like this now? Right then, Rāghava, you should have said honestly: 'I will not kill Vālin.' Then I would never have budged from here."

[28–35] But when great Sugrīva spoke so pitifully in a dejected voice, Rāghava replied: "Poor Sugrīva, listen to the reason why I did not shoot this arrow, and let your anger be dispelled. In ornaments, in your dress, your size, and your movements, you and Vālin are very similar to each other, Sugrīva. Monkey, I cannot tell the difference between the two of you in voice, splendor, glance, valor, or speech. And so, best of monkeys, bewildered by this similarity of appearance, I did not loose my swift, foe-destroying arrow. But soon you will see Vālin writhing on the ground, struck down by me in battle with a single arrow. Lord of monkeys, you

must place on yourself some distinguishing mark by which I may recognize you when you are engaged in single combat. Lakṣmaṇa, pluck that auspicious flowering *gajapuṣpī* creeper and place it around great Sugrīva's neck."

[36–38] Then Lakṣmaṇa plucked a blossoming *gajapuṣpī* that was growing on the mountainside and draped it around Sugrīva's neck. With the creeper fastened about his neck, majestic Sugrīva resembled a rain cloud at twilight with a garland of *balāka* cranes. Radiant in body, intent on Rāma's words, he went with Rāma to Kiṣkindhā, which Vālin protected.

Sarga 13

[1–4] And so, taking up his great gold-adorned bow and with it his arrows, bright as the sun and potent in battle, Rāma, the righteous elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa, went with Sugrīva from Ṛśyamūka to Kiṣkindhā, which was protected by Vālin's prowess. Before great Rāghava went strong-necked Sugrīva and mighty Lakṣmaṇa. Behind came heroic Hanumān, Nala, the monkey Nīla, and also glorious Tāra, all leaders among the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys.

[5–10] They saw trees bending down under the burden of their blossoms, and rivers flowing to the sea bearing their clear waters, and gorges and mountains and waterfalls and caves and high peaks and caverns lovely to behold. And on their way, they beheld ponds whose waters were splendid with lotuses, whose leaves were bright as emeralds and whose buds were fully opened—ponds resounding with *kāraṇḍa* ducks, *sārasa* cranes, *haṃsas*, *vañjulas*, *jalakukkuṭas*, *cakravākas*, and other birds. They saw deer ranging in the forest eating tender shoots of grass, fearlessly wandering everywhere or standing on dry ground; and also, fearsome, solitary wild elephants adorned with white tusks, enemies of the ponds whose banks they shattered.

[11–14] And thus observing the other wild animals in the forest and the sky-going birds, they hurried along, obedient to Sugrīva's will. Now as they went swiftly on, Rāma, delight of the Raghus, noticed a dense grove of trees, and he said to Sugrīva: "There, dark as a rain cloud and massive as a cloud bank in the sky, stands a grove entirely surrounded by plantain trees. I want to know what it is, my friend. I am curious, and I would like you to satisfy my curiosity."

[15–20] When he heard great Rāghava's words, Sugrīva told him about that large grove as he walked along, saying: "That is an immense ashram where all weariness is removed, Rāghava. For it has gardens and parks, with sweet-tasting roots, fruits, and water. There the seven sages called the Saptajanas once lived. They were strict in their vows and always slept upside down in the water. After seven hundred years of living in the forest, existing solely on the air they took in once every seven days, they went to heaven in their own bodies. By virtue of this power of theirs, their ashram, surrounded by a wall of trees, is unapproachable even for the gods or *asuras*, including Indra. Birds and other forest creatures avoid it. Those who enter it even by mistake do not come out again.

[21–24] "But from within one hears the jingling of ornaments and the sweet sounds of instruments and singing, and there is also a divine fragrance, Rāghava. The three sacred fires are also burning there. You can see the dense smoke, gray as a dove's body, shrouding the treetops. Restrained and with palms cupped in reverence, you and your brother Lakṣmaṇa must bow humbly to the sages, righteous Rāghava. For no ill can befall people who bow humbly to these contemplative seers, Rāma."

[25–27] So, with their palms cupped in reverence, Rāma and his brother Lakṣmaṇa respectfully saluted those great seers. When they had saluted respectfully, righteous Rāma, his brother Lakṣmaṇa, and Sugrīva and the other monkeys went on, delighted at heart. Then, when they had traveled a long way from the ashram of the Saptajanas, they saw unassailable Kiṣkindhā, which Vālin protected.

Sarga 14

[1–6] When they had all gone quickly to Kiṣkindhā, which Vālin protected, they stopped in the dense forest, concealing themselves behind trees. Broad-necked Sugrīva, who loved the forest, glanced about the forest and summoned up his great anger. Then, surrounded by his attendants, he challenged Vālin to battle with a dreadful roar, nearly splitting the skies with his roaring. Now, like the newly risen sun, Sugrīva, who moved like a proud lion, looked at Rāma, skillful in action, and spoke these words: "We have reached Vālin's city Kiṣkindhā, with its gateway of pure gold, surrounded by a monkey snare and bristling with banners and engines of

war. Just as the proper season arrives to make the vine bear fruit, so should you, warrior, make good at once your earlier promise to kill Vālin."

[7–12] Addressed in this way by Sugrīva, righteous Rāghava, destroyer of his enemies, then said these words to Sugrīva: "Wearing those flowers called *gajapuṣpī*, you are now easy to recognize: you look like some extraordinary sun up in the heavens within a garland of stars. By loosing a single arrow in battle, monkey, I shall today deliver you from fear and from Vālin's enmity. Just show me that enemy in the guise of a brother, Sugrīva. Then Vālin, struck down here in the forest, will writhe in the dust. If he comes within range of my sight and leaves again alive, then you may come to me at once and reproach me with my guilt. Before your very eyes I split the seven *sāla* trees. Know therefore that by my might I shall kill Vālin today.

[13–17] "Filled with a desire for right, I have never before spoken a falsehood even when I was in danger, warrior, and I shall by no means speak one now. Don't worry! For I shall make my promise fruitful, just as Indra of a hundred sacrifices with his rain makes fruitful the rice sprouting in a field. Therefore, Sugrīva, in order to summon gold-garlanded Vālin, you must make such a noise that that monkey will rush out. Challenged by you, Vālin, with his air of a conqueror, boastful of his victories, and fond of battle, will rush out from the city without delay. Heroes who know their own prowess do not tolerate their enemies' insults in battle, particularly when their women are present."

[18–21] Upon hearing Rāma's speech, tawny-gold Sugrīva roared a savage roar, nearly splitting the skies. Terrified by the noise, cattle ran off, like dazed noblewomen who through some failure of their king are ravished and lose their bright beauty. And deer ran swiftly away like horses breaking in battle, and birds fell to earth like planets whose merit is exhausted. And then, his power enhanced by valor, his roar like that of a host of clouds, the sun's renowned son suddenly let loose a roar like the ocean when its waves are lashed by the wind.

Sarga 15

[1–5] Now, when Vālin, who was in the women's quarters, heard the roaring of his brother, great Sugrīva, he could not bear it. But when he heard that roaring that made all beings tremble, his desire vanished at once

and great rage arose in him. At one moment radiant as the sun at twilight, now, suddenly, Vālin darkened like an eclipsed sun, as his body filled with fury. Like a blazing fire because of his anger, Vālin looked like a pool radiant with red lotuses, his terrifying fangs white as lotus fibers. As he heard the intolerable sound, the tawny monkey rushed out, nearly shattering the earth with the force of his footsteps.

[6–8] But his wife Tārā, agitated and frightened, showed her affection by lovingly embracing him and speaking words meant for his own good: "Come, warrior, give up this anger, which has arisen like the flood of a river, just as one gives up a used garland upon rising from bed at daybreak. I really do not like your rushing out this way. Listen, and I shall tell you why I am holding you back.

[9–13] "The last time, Sugrīva suddenly appeared and angrily challenged you to battle. When you hurried out, injured, and defeated him, he ran away. After you defeated him and above all injured him, his coming back here to challenge you again really arouses my suspicion. There is some significant reason for such insolence and determination, and for the arrogance of his shouting as he roars. I do not believe that Sugrīva has come here without an ally. He is bellowing now because he has obtained an ally on whom he can rely. The monkey Sugrīva is by nature clever and intelligent. He would not have come with someone whose prowess was untested.

[14–17] "Let me tell you the useful information I heard Prince Aṅgada reporting earlier, warrior. Your brother's ally is the celebrated Rāma, harsh in battle, crushing his enemy's forces, like the fire sprung up at the end of the world. But he is also a sheltering tree for the virtuous, the final refuge for the unfortunate, and a resting place for the afflicted. Sole repository of fame, endowed with knowledge and learning, and devoted to his father's command, he is a great mine of virtues, just as the lord of mountains is a mine of minerals.

[18–23] "Therefore, it is not fitting for you to be in conflict with immeasurably great Rāma, who is unconquerable in battle. I shall tell you something, hero, and I do not want you to be angry. You must listen to the good advice I shall give you and act upon it. You must consecrate Sugrīva immediately as crown prince in the proper fashion. You should not make war with your mighty brother, valiant king. I believe it would be proper for

you to put your hostility aside and have friendship with Rāma and affection for Sugrīva. This monkey is your younger brother, deserving your fond indulgence. Whether here or there, he is after all your kinsman. If you regard me as well disposed to you and if you wish to do what pleases me, I beg of you: please carry out my good advice."

Sarga 16

[1–8] But even as Tārā, her face bright as the moon, the lord of stars, spoke in this fashion, Vālin reproached her and said these words: "Why, fair-faced woman, must I suffer the arrogance of my roaring brother, especially since he is my enemy? For invincible heroes who never turn back in battle, to endure insolence is worse than death, timid woman. Thus, I cannot tolerate the arrogance of weak-necked, roaring Sugrīva, who wants to fight a battle. Nor should you despair on my account because of Rāghava. He knows what is right and his conduct is correct, so how could he do wrong? You have shown your affection, Tārā, and displayed your devotion to me. Now go back with the other women. Why do you still follow me? I shall go and fight Sugrīva. Do not be anxious: I shall take away his pride, but I shall not deprive him of his life. I implore you by my life: go back, with a prayer for my victory. When I have sufficiently humbled my brother in battle, I shall return."

[9–11] Then sweet-speaking, compliant Tārā embraced Vālin and circled him reverently, weeping softly. Desiring his victory, she offered a blessing accompanied with *mantras* and then entered the women's quarters with the other women, dazed with grief. Once Tārā had entered her own dwelling with the other women, Vālin went out from the city in a rage, hissing like a great angry snake.

[12–16] Breathing hard in his towering rage, impetuous Vālin cast his glance all about, eagerly seeking his enemy. Then majestic Vālin saw tawny-gold Sugrīva, who was standing his ground with his loins girded, blazing like fire. Seeing mighty Sugrīva stationed there, in a towering rage Vālin girded his loins. Mighty Vālin, his loins tightly girded, advanced toward Sugrīva with his fist raised, eager to fight. Sugrīva too raised his clenched fist and ran furiously toward gold-garlanded Vālin.

[17–20] His eyes copper-red with rage, Vālin spoke these words to Sugrīva, skilled in battle, who came rushing at him with tremendous speed:

“This tightly clenched fist of mine, with fingers well positioned, will take your life with it when I let it fly with full force!” Addressed in that way, Sugrīva angrily replied to Vālin: “It is on your head that my fist shall fall, robbing you of life!” And struck by Vālin, who attacked with such force, angry Sugrīva vomited blood, resembling a mountain with a waterfall.

[21–24] But Sugrīva violently uprooted an entire *sāla* tree and struck Vālin on the limbs, as lightning strikes a great mountain. And now Vālin, staggered by the blows of the *sāla* tree, lurched like a boat at sea overwhelmed by a heavy load. With their terrible strength and valor, with their frightening appearance, those two, swift as Suparṇa, seemed as huge as the sun and the moon in the sky. Though his pride had been broken by Vālin and his strength was failing, Sugrīva, enraged at Vālin, demonstrated his agility.

[25–27] Then Rāghava placed on his bow a shaft like a poisonous snake and loosed the great arrow at Vālin’s chest. Violently struck, Vālin fell to the ground. Now spattered by the flowing blood, like a crimson-flowered *aśoka* tree uprooted by the wind, the son of Vāsava fell in battle unconscious to the ground, like Indra’s flagstaff overthrown.

Sarga 17

[1–3] Then, struck by Rāma’s arrow, Vālin, harsh in battle, fell suddenly like a tree cut down. Adorned with pure gold, his whole body toppled to the ground, like the flagstaff of Indra, the king of gods, when its ropes are released. As that lord of the hosts of monkeys and apes fell to the ground, the earth grew dim, like the sky when the moon vanishes.

[4–8] And yet, though he had fallen to the ground, the great monkey’s majesty, life, power, and valor did not leave his body. For the wonderful jewel-studded gold necklace that Śakra had given him sustained the life, power, and majesty of the foremost of the tawny monkeys. With his gold necklace, the heroic leader of the troops of tawny monkeys looked like a rain cloud edged by the glowing light of evening. Though he had fallen, it was as if his lingering splendor had been broken into three shining parts: his necklace, his body, and the arrow piercing his vital organs. For that missile, shot from Rāma’s bow, had opened the path to heaven for that warrior and gained for him the highest state.

[9–11] Like unassailable great Indra, like irresistible great Indra, great Indra's fallen son, gold-garlanded Vālin, lion chested, long armed, blazing faced, tawny eyed, lay fallen thus in battle, resembling a fire whose flame has gone out, like Yayāti fallen from the world of the gods through exhaustion of his merit, or the sun cast down to earth by Kāla at the end of the world. Followed closely by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma approached and looked at him.

[12–16] Now, when Vālin saw Rāghava and mighty Lakṣmaṇa, he spoke these words, which, though harsh, were civil and consistent with righteousness: "Because of you, I have met my death while in the heat of battle with someone else. What possible merit have you gained by killing me when I wasn't looking? Everyone spreads your good reputation throughout the world, saying: 'Rāma is well born, virtuous, powerful, compassionate, and energetic. He has observed vows, knows pity, is devoted to the welfare of the people, knows when to act, and is firm in his vows.' Considering those good qualities of yours and your exalted lineage as well, I engaged in battle with Sugrīva though Tārā tried to stop me.

[17–21] "Since I didn't see you, I had no idea you would strike me when I was in the heat of battle with another, heedless of you. I did not know that your judgment was destroyed and that you were a vicious evildoer hiding under a banner of righteousness, like a well overgrown with grass. I did not know that you were a wicked person wearing the trappings of virtue, concealed by a disguise of righteousness like a smoldering fire. I did no harm either in your kingdom or in your city, nor did I insult you; so why did you kill me, an innocent forest-ranging monkey, living only on fruits and roots, when I had joined battle here with someone else and was not fighting against you?

[22–25] "You are the handsome, renowned son of a ruler of men. You also have the visible signs associated with righteousness, king. What man, born in a kshatriya family, learned, free of doubts, and bearing signs of righteousness, would perform such a cruel deed? Born in a royal family, reputed to be virtuous, why do you go about with the appearance of decency when you are in fact not decent, Rāma? Conciliation, generosity, forbearance, righteousness, truthfulness, steadiness, and courage, as well as punishment of wrongdoers are the virtues of kings, your majesty.

[26–28] “We are but forest-dwelling beasts, Rāma, living on roots and fruits. That is our nature, while you are a man and a lord of men. Land, gold, and silver are reasons for conquest. But what possible profit could there be for you in the fruit belonging to me in this forest? Both statesmanship and restraint as well as punishing and rewarding are royal functions that must not be confused. Kings must not act capriciously.

[29–32] “But you, instead, care only for your own desire. You are wrathful, unsteady, confused about your royal functions, and interested only in shooting your arrows. You have no reverence for what is right, no settled judgment concerning statecraft; and because you are addicted to pleasures, you are driven by your passions, lord of men. Now that you have done this despicable deed and killed me, an innocent creature, with your arrow, what will you say in the presence of virtuous men, Kākutstha? A king-killer, a brahman-killer, a cow-killer, a thief, a man who delights in killing, an atheist, a man who marries before his elder brother—all of them go to hell.

[33–35] “Virtuous people cannot wear my skin, my fur and bones are forbidden, and my flesh cannot be eaten by people like you who observe the law. Only five among the five-clawed creatures can be eaten by brahmans and kshatriyas, Rāghava: the hedgehog, the porcupine, the lizard, the rabbit, and fifth, the turtle. Wise men do not touch my skin or bones, king, and my flesh must not be eaten; yet I, a five-clawed creature, have been killed.

[36–38] “With you as her protector, Kākutstha, the earth has no protector and is like a virtuous young wife with a deceitful husband. Treacherous, dishonest, mean, with false humility, how could a wretch like you be born of the great Daśaratha? I have been killed by this mad elephant Rāma, who has broken the fetters of good conduct, overstepped the laws of virtuous men, and disregarded the goad of lawfulness.

[39–42] “If you had fought openly in battle, prince, I would have killed you, and you would now be gazing on Vaivasvata, god of death. But I, who am unassailable in battle, have been struck down by you when you could not be seen, as a man sleeping under the influence of drink may be killed by a snake. I could have given you Rāvaṇa, not killed in battle but bound around the neck; yet for that same outcome you killed me, wishing to please Sugrīva. Had Maithilī been hidden in the ocean waters or even in the underworld known as Pātāla, at your command I would have brought her back like the white she-mule.

[43–45] “It is fitting that when I have gone to heaven, Sugrīva should obtain the kingdom. But for you to have killed me unjustly in battle is not fitting. Granted, all people, being what they are, are destined for death. But if what you have accomplished is proper, think of a good defense.” When he had spoken in this way, the great son of the king of the gods, pained by the arrow that had wounded him, his mouth dry, looked at Rāma, radiant as the sun, and fell silent.

Sarga 18

[1–5] Stricken and losing consciousness, Vālin had addressed to Rāma those words that were civil, beneficial, consistent with righteousness and statecraft, yet harsh. As he finished speaking, that best of tawny monkeys was like a darkened sun, like a rain cloud that has given up its water, or like an extinguished fire. Rāma, having been censured, at last addressed Vālin, lord of tawny monkeys, with unsurpassed words distinguished by righteousness and statecraft: “How can you, who do not understand righteousness, statecraft, pleasure, or even worldly conduct, in your foolishness reproach me here today? My friend, in your monkey frivolousness, you wish to revile me here without consulting elders endowed with judgment and respected as teachers.

[6–11] “This earth with its mountains, woods, and forests belongs to the Ikṣvākus, as does the right of punishing and rewarding its beasts, birds, and men. It is protected by righteous Bharata, who is truthful and upright, who knows the true nature of righteousness, pleasure, and statecraft, and who devotes himself to punishing and rewarding. He is a king who knows the proper place and time for action. In him are well established both statesmanship and humility, as well as truth and valor, as prescribed in sacred texts. With his command given for the sake of righteousness, we and the other princes go about the entire world seeking the continuance of righteousness. While that tiger among kings, Bharata, devoted to righteousness, protects the whole earth, who could suppress righteousness? Firm in our own high duty, honoring Bharata’s command, we duly chastise whoever strays from the path of righteousness.

[12–14] “But you violate righteousness and are condemned by your actions. You are engrossed in the pursuit of pleasures, and you have not kept to the path of kings. An older brother, a father, and a bestower of

learning—these three are to be regarded as fathers by one who walks the path of righteousness. A younger brother, one’s own son, and also a pupil with good qualities—these three are to be thought of as one’s sons, if righteousness is the standard here.

[15–17] “Righteousness is subtle, leaping monkey, and extremely difficult to understand even for good people. The Self in the heart of all beings knows good and evil. You are frivolous and consult with frivolous, weak-minded monkeys, like someone blind from birth who consults with others blind from birth. What then can you possibly see? But I shall tell you clearly the meaning of my statement, for you should not condemn me simply because you are angry.

[18–22] “Learn therefore the reason why I have killed you: you have forsaken everlasting morality and live in sin with your brother’s wife. Out of lust you committed a sinful deed: while great Sugrīva is alive, you lived in sin with your daughter-in-law Rumā. You acted according to your desires, monkey, and in violating your brother’s wife, you departed from righteousness. That is why this punishment was administered to you. Leader of troops of tawny monkeys, I see no way other than punishment to chastise someone who is opposed to righteousness and deviates from universal custom. Death is the punishment prescribed for a man who out of lust approaches his daughter, sister, or younger brother’s wife.

[23–25] “Now Bharata is the ruler of the earth, and we merely carry out his commands. How then can we overlook your violation of righteousness? Wise Bharata is intent on chastising those addicted to sensual pleasures, righteously disciplining whoever transgresses major laws. And we have made Bharata’s command our sacred law, lord of tawny monkeys, and are intent on punishing those who, like you, transgress the proper limits.

[26–32] “My friendship with Sugrīva is just like my friendship with Lakṣmaṇa. And for the sake of his wife and kingdom, he is devoted to my highest good. Moreover, I made a promise at that time in the presence of the other monkeys. And how can someone like me disregard a promise? Therefore, for all those important reasons that are consistent with righteousness, you must agree that your punishment is appropriate. Your chastisement must be viewed as righteous in every way. A person who keeps righteousness clearly in view must assist his friend. Then, too, men who have done evil but have been punished by kings become pure and go to

heaven just as do virtuous men. My noble ancestor Māndhātṛ inflicted a terrible punishment on a mendicant who committed a sin like the sin you committed. Sins have been committed as well by other heedless rulers of the earth. But when they made atonement, that taint was removed.

[33–36] "So enough of this sorrow! Your death was decided upon justly, tiger among monkeys: we were not being arbitrary. By snares, nooses, and various traps, men in hiding or out in the open catch all kinds of beasts who run away terrified or confidently stand still. Men seeking meat shoot animals that are attentive or inattentive or even facing the other way, and there is nothing wrong with this. Even royal seers who fully understand righteousness go hunting here. And so, monkey, I struck you down with an arrow in battle regardless of whether you fought back or not. After all, you are only a monkey.

[37–39] "There is no doubt, best of monkeys, that it is kings who give life and prosperity and otherwise unattainable religious merit. One should not harm them, nor censure them, nor insult them, nor say displeasing things to them: they are gods in human form going about on earth. Yet you, who know nothing of righteousness and simply follow your passions, rebuke me for abiding by my sacred ancestral laws."

[40–44] Addressed by Rāma in that way, Vālin, lord of monkeys, was deeply disturbed. Joining his palms in supplication, he replied to Rāma: "Best of men, there is no doubt that what you have said is true. Indeed, a lowly person should not talk back to an exalted one. Please do not find fault with me even for the unseemly, displeasing words I spoke before by mistake, Rāghava. For you understand worldly interests and know the truth, and you are devoted to the well-being of the people. Your immutable judgment about determining crime and punishment is correct. You know righteousness. Therefore, with righteous words, comfort even me, known to be a flagrant violator of righteousness."

[45–51] Like an elephant mired in mud, Vālin cried out in distress, his voice choked with tears. Then, looking at Rāma, he said softly: "I do not grieve as much for myself, or Tārā, or even my kinsmen as I do for my eminently virtuous son Aṅgada of the golden armbands. Cherished since his childhood, he will be so wretched at not seeing me that he will dry up like a pond whose waters have been drunk. Show the same high regard to Aṅgada as to Sugrīva, for you are their teacher and protector, abiding by the rules of

what must be done and what must not be done. And, king and lord of men, you should think of Sugrīva and Añgada with the same affection as you have for Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa. And please arrange it so that Sugrīva will not think ill of poor Tārā, who is guilty only through my guilt. For the kingdom can be served only by someone you favor, who is under your control and obedient to your wishes.”

[52–55] Rāma then consoled Vālin, who now saw things clearly: “You must not worry about us, or even about yourself, best of monkeys, for we made our determination with regard to you according to the law. Neither he who inflicts punishment on one who deserves punishment nor he who is punished when he deserves punishment perishes: each serves the due process of justice. Therefore, freed from sin by meeting with this punishment, you have returned to your own righteous nature by the path determined by righteousness.”

[56–57] When he heard the sweet, calm speech of great Rāma, who followed the path of righteousness and crushed his enemies in battle, the monkey said these very fitting words: “If when I was half unconscious with the pain of the arrow, lord, I unwittingly censured you, whose fearful prowess is equal to great Indra’s, please be gracious and forgive me, ruler of the earth.”

Sarga 19

[1–4] Answered with well-reasoned words, that great king of monkeys made no reply as he lay deeply wounded by the arrow. He had been beaten with trees, and his limbs were completely shattered by stones. Pierced by Rāma’s arrow, he lost consciousness as his life neared its end. His wife Tārā heard that Vālin, tiger among leaping monkeys, had been struck down in battle by an arrow shot by Rāma. When she heard the painful news of her husband’s severe mortal wound, she was greatly frightened and rushed out with her son from the many-chambered mountain cave.

[5–9] Now at the sight of Rāma with his bow, those mighty monkeys who were Añgada’s attendants ran off terrified. Tārā saw those mighty tawny monkeys running away swiftly, like deer bolting from their herd when their herd leader is struck down. All of them were anguished and as fearful of Rāma as if they were being pursued by his arrows. Anguished herself, she approached them and said: “Monkeys, attendants of the lion

among kings, why have you abandoned him and run off in distress and terror? Is it because, for the sake of the kingdom, a fierce brother has had Rāma strike down his brother with arrows shot from afar, striking from afar?”

[10–16] When the monkeys, who could change form at will, heard the speech of that lovely woman, the monkey’s wife, they spoke timely words with one voice: “You have a living son Aṅgada, so turn back and protect him. For Yama, the ender of all things, in the form of Rāma has killed Vālin and is leading him away. As if by a thunderbolt, Vālin has been felled by thunderbolt-like arrows, which shattered the trees and large rocks he hurled. Now that that tiger among leaping monkeys, splendid as Śakra, has been killed, this entire army, which had advanced, has scattered and fled. Let the warriors protect the city, and let Vālin’s son Aṅgada be consecrated as king. Once he has assumed his rank, the leaping monkeys will serve him. Or perhaps you wish to remain here, fair-faced woman, since this very day hostile monkeys will quickly take over our citadels? There are forest-dwelling monkeys out there, both with and without wives. We are in great danger from our destitute and covetous kinsmen.”

[17–19] But when the sweet-smiling woman heard the words of those who were close by, she spoke in a way befitting her: “What use have I for a son, or a kingdom, or myself, now that my illustrious husband, that lion among monkeys, has perished? I shall go to the feet of that great monkey who was felled by the arrow Rāma shot.”

[20–24] With these words she ran, weeping and haggard with grief, sorrowfully beating her breast and her head with both hands. As she approached, she saw on the ground her fallen husband, that slayer of *dānava* lords who never turned their backs in battle, him who hurled the highest mountains as Vāsava hurls his *vajras*, impetuous as a storm-wind, thundering like a mass of great clouds, roaring fearfully among other roarers, valiant as Śakra. Now he was like a cloud stilled once it has rained, a hero felled by a hero as a great stag is slain by a tiger for its flesh, or like a sacred tree with banners and railing, worshiped by all the people, uprooted by Suparṇa in his search for snakes.

[25–28] The lovely woman saw Rāma standing there, leaning on his strong bow, and also the younger brothers of both Rāma and her husband. She passed them by, but as she drew near and saw her husband who had

been struck down in battle, she fell to the ground, suffering and bewildered. Then she rose up again as if asleep, crying out, “My husband!” and wept as she saw her lord caught in the bonds of Mṛtyu, god of death. Now as Sugrīva watched her crying like an osprey and saw Añgada who had also come, he became deeply despondent.

Sarga 20

[1–3] When passionate Tārā, her face like the lord of stars, saw her husband on the ground, struck down by a death-dealing shaft loosed from Rāma’s bow, like an elephant struck by an arrow, she went to him and embraced him. Seeing the monkey lord Vālin, splendid as great Indra, brought down like an uprooted tree, Tārā was anguished. With her heart tortured by grief, she lamented:

[4–7] “Warrior with your fierce prowess in battle, best of leaping monkeys, why do you now not speak to me, a wretched woman who has done no wrong? Rise up, tiger among tawny monkeys! Go to your own fine bed. Great kings like you do not sleep on the ground. How deep your love for the earth must be, lord of earth, that even in death you abandon me and embrace her with your limbs. By living righteously, warrior, you must have created on the path to heaven some other city as charming as Kiṣkindhā.

[8–11] “Now you have brought to an end those pleasures we enjoyed with you in the honey-scented woodlands. Without joy, without hope, I am sunk in a sea of grief since you, great troop leader among troop leaders, have gone to your death. My grief-tortured heart must be hard indeed that it does not break into a thousand pieces though I see you on the ground, destroyed. This is the fruit you harvest, king of leaping monkeys, for having exiled Sugrīva and taken his wife.

[12–16] “Lord of monkeys, you foolishly rebuked me when I, intent on your happiness and wishing you well, offered you good advice. It is surely inexorable Kāla, the ender of all things, that forced you down, powerless under Sugrīva’s power, and put an end to your life. Once I was filled with happiness, but now, in my wretchedness, I must helplessly lead the life of a wretched, grief-anguished widow. And the delicate young warrior Añgada, used to pleasure, indulged by me—what kind of life will he lead, when his father’s brother is beside himself with anger? Son, look carefully at your father so fond of righteousness, for you will never see him again, dear child.

[17–20] “And you, console your son, kiss him on his head, and give him your instructions, for you are starting on your final journey. By killing you, Rāma has done a great deed and has acquitted himself of his promise to Sugrīva. Be content, Sugrīva. You shall have Rumā back again. Enjoy the kingship without anxiety. Your brother, who was your enemy, has been cut down. Why do you not reply lovingly to me as I lament this way? Lord of monkeys, behold these many excellent wives of yours.”

[21–25] Hearing her lament, those monkey women, afflicted with sorrow, surrounded wretched Añgada on all sides and wailed: “With your braceleted arms worthy of a hero, why do you now abandon Añgada and go on this long journey? You have a beloved son with qualities like your own. It is not right to abandon your son like this and go away. Beloved lord, what displeasing thing has been done by me or your son that you so discourteously abandon me, your companion, and go to Yama’s abode, fine-robed warrior? Forgive me, long-armed lord of the dynasty of the tawny monkeys, if I have unknowingly done something to displease you. Warrior, I prostrate myself at your feet.” Accompanied by the other monkey women, fair Tārā, weeping piteously in this way beside her husband, determined to sit fasting to death at the place where Vālin lay.

Sarga 21

[1–6] Then Hanumān, leader of the troops of tawny monkeys, gently consoled Tārā, who had dropped like a star falling from the sky, saying: “When he dies, a living being unfailingly reaches the good or evil end produced as the fruit of his actions and brought about by his virtues or faults. What person deserving lamentation do you lament, when you yourself deserve our lamentation? When you yourself are pitiable, for what pitiable person do you grieve? And who should mourn for whom, since the body is no more than a bubble? You must instead look after the boy Añgada, since you have this living son. You must think about the proper things to do for him in the future. You know that the coming and going of beings is uncertain. Therefore, wise woman, do what is auspicious, not what is worldly. He upon whom thousands, millions, and hundreds of millions of tawny monkeys once subsisted, each obtaining a share, has now reached the end of his allotted time.

[7–11] “This monkey saw things rightly and was devoted to conciliation, giving, and forbearance. Since he has gone to the world of those who conquer through righteousness, you should not grieve for him. But now, blameless woman, your son Aṅgada, the other tigers among tawny monkeys, and the kingdom of the lord of apes and tawny monkeys all have you as their protector. Gently direct these two who are tormented by grief, lovely woman. Let Aṅgada here, supported by you, rule the earth. And since there is a male offspring, you must do everything that must now be done for the king. That is the proper decision for this time. The king of the tawny monkeys must be purified by cremation, and Aṅgada must be consecrated. You will find peace of mind once you see your son upon the throne.”

[12–16] When she heard his words, Tārā, crushed by her husband’s disastrous end, made this reply to Hanumān, who stood near: “Even if I had a hundred sons like Aṅgada, I would rather embrace the body of this warrior, though he is dead. I have no power over the king of the tawny monkeys or Aṅgada. His father’s brother Sugrīva is at hand for all that must be done. Nor can your idea concerning Aṅgada be carried out, Hanumān: a son’s true kinsman is his father, not his mother, best of tawny monkeys. There is surely nothing more fitting for me in this world or in the next than to join the king of tawny monkeys. It is fitting for me to rest on this bed where rests my warrior, killed while facing his enemy.”

Sarga 22

[1–4] Barely breathing, his life ebbing, Vālin looked all about and saw first Sugrīva, who stood in front of his son. In a clear voice he addressed Sugrīva, the victorious lord of leaping monkeys, and said affectionately: “Sugrīva, please do not think me guilty because of my sin: I was forcibly carried away by some predestined confusion of mind. I think that happiness was not ordained for both of us at the same time, dear child. Thus, the friendship proper for brothers turned out quite otherwise.

[5–7] “Receive this very day sovereignty over these forest-dwelling monkeys. As for me, know that this very day I am going to the abode of Vaivasvata, lord of the dead. For I am rapidly giving up my life, my sovereignty, this vast majesty, and my great reputation, which was beyond

reproach. Since I am in this condition, you must carry out the instructions I am about to give you, heroic king, though they will not be easy to follow.

[8–12] "Here is Aṅgada who, although a child, is not childish. Worthy of happiness, raised in happiness, he has fallen to the ground, his face covered with tears. Look upon my son, who is dearer to me than life itself, as if he were your own flesh-and-blood son. Protect him in every way so that although he is deprived of me, he will not be otherwise deprived. You must also be his provider and defender in every way and his protector from all dangers, lord of monkeys, just as I was. Your equal in prowess, this majestic son of Tārā will stand before you in the slaughter of the *rākṣasas*. Advancing valorously in battle, this powerful young son of Tārā, mighty Aṅgada, will perform worthy deeds.

[13–16] "And Tārā, this daughter of Suṣeṇa, is thoroughly knowledgeable about deciding subtle matters and about various portents. Whatever she says is right should be done without doubt, for nothing Tārā believes turns out to be otherwise. And you must accomplish Rāghava's purpose without hesitation; for it would be unrighteous not to do it, and if he were slighted he would harm you. Now take this divine golden garland, Sugrīva, for the exalted Śrī abiding in it will leave it once I am dead."

[17–23] But Vālin addressed him with such brotherly affection that Sugrīva put aside his delight and became wretched again, like the moon swallowed up by Rāhu, the planet that eclipses it. Sobered by Vālin's words, carefully doing what was proper, he took with permission that golden garland. When Vālin had given him that golden garland and was prepared for death, he turned his gaze to his son Aṅgada standing nearby and said affectionately to him: "Be attentive to time and place now, enduring the agreeable and the disagreeable. Bearing happiness and sorrow in their turn, be submissive to Sugrīva's will. Sugrīva will not think well of you, great-armed son, if you act as you did when constantly indulged by me. Don't associate with his enemies or with associates of his adversaries, subduer of foes. Restrained and devoted to your master's interests, be submissive to Sugrīva's will. You must not show either excessive affection or lack of affection: both are serious faults, so observe moderation."

[24–26] Then, with these words, in intense pain from the arrow, rolling his eyes and baring his dreadful fangs, he departed this life. Now when that heroic lord of the leaping monkeys was dead, the monkeys there could find

no happiness, like forest-dwelling cattle in a great forest full of lions, when their bull has been struck down. Then Tārā, plunged in a sea of misfortune, looked at her dead husband's face and sank to the ground, embracing Vālin like a vine clinging to a mighty tree that has been cut down.

Sarga 23

[1–5] Then Tārā kissed the monkey king's face and said these words to her dead husband, who had gone from this world: "You would not do as I said, warrior, and so you lie painfully on the rough, rocky ground. The earth must surely be dearer to you than I, lord of monkeys, since you lie embracing her and do not answer me. Sugrīva is attacking, my beloved, reckless warrior, and the leaders of the apes and monkeys seek protection from you, mighty one. Hearing their painful lament, that of grieving Añgada, and these words of mine, why do you not awaken?

[6–8] "Slain in battle, you lie on this hero's bed where once you made your slain enemies lie. My battle-loving, proud beloved, born in a family of impeccable courage, you have gone away, leaving me alone and without a protector. A wise man should surely never give his daughter to a warrior. Look at me, a warrior's wife, suddenly destroyed and made a widow.

[9–12] "My pride is broken, my everlasting happiness is shattered, and I am plunged into a vast, bottomless ocean of grief. Surely this hard heart of mine is made of stone, since it does not break into a hundred pieces now as I behold my slain husband. For he was my friend and my husband and, by his very nature, my beloved. Conquered in battle, my warrior has gone to his death. When a woman has lost her husband, wise men call her a widow, even though she may have sons and abundant wealth and grain.

[13–16] "Warrior, you are lying in a pool of blood spreading from your body, as if on a bed with a crimson cover. I cannot clasp in my arms your body covered all over with dust and blood, bull among leaping monkeys. Today Sugrīva has achieved his purpose in this dreadful feud, for a single arrow shot by Rāma has dispelled his fear. Now that you have gone to your death, I gaze at you, but the arrow fixed in your heart keeps me from touching your body."

[17–20] Then Nīla drew out the arrow lodged in Vālin's body as one might draw out a gleaming poisonous snake lurking in a mountain cave. And the radiance of that arrow as it was drawn out was as bright as a ray of

the sun, maker of day, caught on the summit of the western mountain. And from his wounds streams of blood poured down on all sides, like floodwaters mingled with dark red earth rushing down a mountain. As she caressed her warrior husband, who had been struck down by the missile and was covered with the dust of battle, she bathed him with tears flowing from her eyes.

[21–25] Then the lovely woman Tārā, still gazing at her slain lord, his limbs all spattered with blood, spoke to her tawny-eyed son Aṅgada: "My son, behold your father's dreadful final state. The end has come to an enmity caused by an evil deed. My son, salute the proud king, your father, whose body was like the newly risen sun, for he has set out for Yama's abode." Addressed in this fashion, he rose and embraced his father's feet with his well-rounded arms, saying, "It is I, Aṅgada." Tārā continued: "Aṅgada salutes you. Why do you not say to him as before, 'Long life to you, my son!'?

[26–30] "Though you are without consciousness, I shall stay by you with my son, just as a cow with her calf stays by her bull when he is suddenly struck down by a lion. How is it that without me, your wife, you first offered the sacrifice of battle and then, using many blows as water, took the concluding bath? Why do I not see here that golden garland of yours, which was given to you by the king of gods when you pleased him in battle? Though your life is gone, proud monkey, royal Śrī does not abandon you, just as the radiance of the setting sun does not leave the king of mountains. You did not follow my good advice, nor was I able to hold you back. Destroyed in battle, you have destroyed me and my son. Along with you, Śrī now abandons me."

Sarga 24

[1–4] As soon as he saw that Vālin had expired, Rāghava, tormentor of his enemies, spoke these courteous words to Sugrīva: "A dead person derives no benefit from grief and lamentation: you should all attend to what must be done next for him. Worldly practice must be followed. But enough of your tears: no religious rite can be undertaken after its proper time. Fate is the prime mover in this world. Fate brings about action. Fate is the prime mover controlling all beings here on earth.

[5–8] “No one is truly in control of any action; nor is anyone capable of compelling anyone else. People are ruled by their inherent nature, and fate is their final resort. Fate does not violate fate. Fate is inevitable. Nor can anyone resist his inherent nature and pass beyond it. Fate has no kinship, no connection with friends or relations. There is no means to combat it or prevail over it. It is the prime mover, and no one can master it. But he who sees clearly should recognize in everything the unfolding of fate. Religious merit, wealth, and pleasure are all determined by the workings of fate.

[9–11] “Vālin has gone from this world and attained his own true nature. He has obtained the fruit of his actions purified by timely attention to gaining religious merit, wealth, and pleasure, lord of leaping monkeys. By losing his life in battle, that great monkey has now reached the heaven that he won through attention to his own duty. It is surely to the highest destiny that the leader of troops of tawny monkeys has gone. So enough of this lamenting! Attend to the duties at hand.”

[12–18] At the end of Rāma’s speech, Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy warriors, spoke these courteous words to Sugrīva, who was distraught: “You must perform Vālin’s funerary rites without delay, Sugrīva. Together with Tārā and Añgada, arrange for his cremation. Order many dry logs and fine sandalwood for performing Vālin’s funerary rites. And comfort Añgada, who is despondent. You must not be foolish: the city is depending on you. Añgada must bring garlands, various garments, clarified butter, oil, perfumes, and whatever else is immediately required. And you, Tāra, make haste. Bring a bier quickly, for speed is always advantageous and is especially appropriate at a time like this. Let leaping monkeys fit to carry the bier be made ready. Capable and strong, they shall bear Vālin away.”

[19–25] After speaking thus to Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa, delight of Sumitrā, killer of enemy warriors, remained standing near his brother. Tāra was thrown into a flurry at hearing Lakṣmaṇa’s words, and he quickly entered the cave, intent on getting a bier. Then Tāra rushed back bringing with him a bier borne by monkey warriors fit to bear it. Crying aloud, Sugrīva and Añgada then lifted Vālin up and placed him on the bier. Then, when the lord of the leaping monkeys, King Sugrīva, had placed on the bier the lifeless Vālin, adorned with various ornaments, garlands, and garments, he commanded: “Let the funeral rites of this noble monkey be carried out in a

suitable fashion. Let leaping monkeys scattering many jewels of every kind precede the bier.”

[26–29] Then, without delay, they performed Vālin’s funeral rites with the same extraordinary pomp that is shown on earth for human kings. Tāra and all the other monkeys who had lost their kinsman surrounded Aṅgada and quickly set out, crying aloud. And Tārā and all the other monkey women who had lost their lord followed after their husband crying aloud, making a pitiful sound. Echoing the sound of those monkey women weeping in the forest, all the woods and mountains seemed to cry out on every side.

[30–31] On a solitary sandbank of the mountain stream, entirely surrounded by water, a large number of forest-dwelling monkeys built a pyre. Then those serving as bearers lowered the bier from their shoulders and stood to one side, all of them filled with grief.

[32–38] Now, when Tārā saw her husband lying on the bier, she placed his head on her lap and lamented sorrowfully: “Why do you not look at me, when I am so grief-stricken? Though you are dead, proud monkey, your face seems joyful and radiant as the setting sun, just as it looked when you were alive. It is Kāla, the god of death, in the form of Rāma who is dragging you away, monkey: with a single arrow in battle, he has made widows of us all. Here are your monkey women, always dear to you. They have traveled this long path on foot, lord of kings. Why do you not awake? Why do you not gaze now upon these wives whom you surely love, with their faces bright as the moon, or at Sugrīva, the lord of leaping monkeys? Here surrounding you are your ministers, Tāra and the others, and the people who dwell in your city, blameless king. Dismiss these monkeys as you always do, tamer of your foes, so that all of us women, drunk with wine, can make love with you in the woods.”

[39–44] Plunged in grief for her husband, Tārā lamented in this way until the other monkey women, haggard with grief, raised her up. Then Aṅgada, distraught with grief, wept for his father as he placed him on the pyre with Sugrīva’s help. Beside himself with sorrow, he then lit the fire according to the ritual prescriptions, and reverently circled his father, who had set out on his long journey. When the leaping monkeys had cremated Vālin in keeping with the ritual prescriptions, they went to make water-offerings in that auspicious river with its cool waters. Then, gathered

together there, they placed Añgada in front and, along with Sugrīva and Tārā, sprinkled water for Vālin. And thus did mighty Kākutstha and Sugrīva, dejected and sharing the same grief, have funerary rites.

Sarga 25

[1–7] Then the chief ministers of the monkeys surrounded grief-stricken Sugrīva, whose garments were still wet, and waited in attendance upon him. Approaching great-armed Rāma, tireless in action, they all stood with palms cupped in reverence, like the seers before Grandfather Brahmā. Then, his palms cupped in reverence, the wind god's son Hanumān, bright as the golden Mount Meru, his face like the newly risen sun, spoke these words: "Through your grace, lord, Sugrīva has obtained this great ancestral monkey kingdom, so difficult to obtain. With your permission, he will enter his fair city with his friends and attend to all his duties. When he is anointed with various perfumes and herbs in accordance with the ritual prescriptions, he will specially honor you with jewels and garlands. Please proceed from here to the delightful mountain cave Kiṣkindhā. Make the monkeys rejoice by uniting them with their king."

[8–10] Thus addressed by Hanumān, wise and eloquent Rāma, slayer of enemy warriors, replied to Hanumān: "Observing my father's command, gentle Hanumān, I shall not enter a village or a city for fourteen years. But let the heroic bull among monkeys Sugrīva enter his wonderful, luxurious cave at once and be consecrated king according to the ritual prescriptions."

[11–15] Then, when Rāma had spoken in this fashion to Hanumān, he said to Sugrīva: "Warrior, have Añgada too consecrated as crown prince. It is now Śravaṇa, the first of the rainy months, bringing the onset of the monsoon. Now begin the four months called the rainy season, my friend. This is not the time for undertakings. So enter your fair city, my friend; I shall dwell on this mountain with Lakṣmaṇa. Here is a pleasant mountain cave, my friend, spacious and airy, with abundant water and many lotuses and lilies nearby. When the month of Kārtika has arrived, you must try to kill Rāvaṇa, for this was our agreement. But for now, my friend, enter your dwelling, be consecrated as king, and make your friends rejoice."

[16–19] Dismissed in this way by Rāma, Sugrīva, bull among monkeys, entered the charming city Kiṣkindhā once protected by Vālin. Thousands of monkeys respectfully greeted the lord of monkeys as he entered and

joyfully surrounded him. Then, when they saw the lord of the troops of tawny monkeys, all his assembled subjects bowed their heads and then prostrated themselves on the ground. After addressing all his subjects and making them rise, Sugrīva, vigorous and mighty, entered the lovely women's quarters, which had been his brother's.

[20–25] When he had gone in there and come out again, his friends consecrated Sugrīva, bull among monkeys, as the immortals consecrated thousand-eyed Indra. They brought him the gold-adorned, white umbrella and the two gold-handled white yak-tail fly whisks, which confer glory, as well as all kinds of jewels and every kind of seed and herb, shoots and blossoms of succulent trees, white garments, white unguent, and very fragrant garlands of flowers that grow on dry ground and in water. And they also brought the finest sandalwood and many kinds of fragrant things, and gold-colored unhusked grain, *priyañgu* honey and clarified butter, curds, a tiger skin, and boar-skin sandals. And sixteen beautiful, joyous maidens came there bringing yellow and red unguents.

[26–33] According to prescribed rule, those bulls among the twice-born brahmans were gratified with gifts of jewels and garments and things to eat. After that, priests who knew the vedic *mantras* made an offering with an oblation purified by those *mantras* into the lighted fire encircled by *kuśa* grass. Then, with various *mantras*, they installed that best of monkeys, who was facing east, on a gold-footed throne that was covered with fine cushions and standing on a lovely turret of the palace adorned with colorful garlands. From rivers and streams, from sacred bathing places all around, and from all the oceans, those bulls among monkeys had brought pure, auspicious waters, which they mixed together and placed in gold pitchers. Then, at the proper moment, by the rule prescribed in the *śāstras* and ordained by the great sages, using auspicious bulls' horns and golden jars, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Mainda, Dvivida, Hanumān, Jāmbavān, and Nala consecrated Sugrīva with clear, fragrant water, just as the Vasus consecrated thousand-eyed Vāsava.

[34–38] Once Sugrīva was consecrated, all those thousands of great bulls among monkeys shouted for joy. And following Rāma's advice, Sugrīva, bull among tawny monkeys, embraced Añgada and had him consecrated as crown prince. Now, when Añgada was consecrated, the great leaping monkeys, full of compassion, showed their approval of Sugrīva, crying,

"Excellent! Excellent!" Within the mountain cave, the city of Kiṣkindhā was delightful, filled with happy, thriving people and resplendent with flags and banners. Then, once the vigorous leader of the monkey army had informed great Rāma of his solemn consecration, he recovered his wife Rumā and took possession of his kingdom as did Indra, the lord of the thirty gods.

Sarga 26

[1–3] Now, when the monkey Sugrīva had been consecrated and had entered his cave, Rāma went with his brother to Mount Prasravaṇa, which resounded with the cries of tigers and wild beasts and was full of lions roaring frightfully. Covered with all kinds of bushes and vines, thick with trees, it was inhabited by apes, monkeys, langurs, and forest-cats. Always abounding in pure water, the mountain towered like a mass of clouds.

[4–7] Rāma and Saumitri chose as their dwelling a large, deep cave on the peak of that mountain. And there righteous Rāghava dwelt with Lakṣmaṇa on Mount Prasravaṇa, with its many lovely caves and bowers. But though that mountain was very pleasant and full of valuable things, Rāma did not feel the least delight living there, for he was thinking of his abducted wife, who was more precious to him than his life's breath. Nor would sleep come to him when he had gone to bed at night, especially when he saw the moon rising in the east.

[8–14] Grieving for Sītā, his mind weakened by all his tears, sorrowful Kākutstha was constantly absorbed in his grief. Equally unhappy, his brother Lakṣmaṇa said these words, entreating him: "Enough of this yielding to anguish, warrior. You should not grieve. Surely you know that when a person grieves, all his endeavors fail. You are attentive to your duties in this world, you are devoted to the gods, and you are a believer, Rāghava. You are also virtuous and resolute. Without resolve you cannot by acts of valor kill your enemy in battle, particularly that devious *rākṣasa*. You must first put aside your grief and make a firm resolve. Then you can crush that *rākṣasa* and his followers. For you could overturn the very earth, together with her oceans, forests, and mountains, Kākutstha, let alone Rāvaṇa. With fiery words I shall surely arouse your slumbering courage, as one would rekindle with timely oblations a fire smoldering beneath its ashes."

[15–18] Commending Lakṣmaṇa's useful and suitable speech, Rāghava spoke these warm, affectionate words: "You have said what should be said by someone devoted, affectionate, helpful, and truly valiant, Lakṣmaṇa. Here, I have forsaken my grief, which makes all undertakings fail. I shall call forth my irresistible fierceness in deeds of valor. But the rainy season is now at hand, and I must wait for autumn. Then I shall destroy that *rākṣasa* together with his kingdom and his troops."

[19–23] Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri, delight of his friends, was overjoyed to hear Rāma's words, and he spoke once again: "The words you have just spoken are worthy of you, slaughterer of your enemies. Now, Kākutstha, you have returned to your own nature. Recognizing your own heroism, you must be true to it. This speech is worthy of you and of your renowned family. Therefore, Rāghava, tiger among men, pass the rainy season at hand thinking about the defeat of your enemy. Hold back your anger and await the autumn. Endure these four months with me. Live on this mountain, haunt of the king of beasts, passing the time and preparing to destroy your enemy."

Sarga 27

[1–6] And so, after he had killed Vālin and had Sugrīva consecrated, Rāma, who was living on top of Mount Mālyavān, said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Now the time has come, the season when the rains arrive. See, the sky is covered with clouds as big as mountains. The heavens, which drank the oceans' water through the rays of the sun, bringer of light, are giving birth to the elixir of life, their embryo carried for nine months. On a stairway of clouds, one could climb the sky to ornament the sun, maker of day, with garlands of *kuṭaja* and *arjuna* blossoms. The sky seems to have wounds bound up with dressings of soft clouds, red with the color of sunset but very pale at the edges. Sighing with gentle winds, the sky, pale with clouds yet tinged by the sunset, resembles a lovesick man anointed with red sandalwood paste.

[7–10] "And like Sītā burning with grief, this heat-stricken earth, newly flooded with water, sheds tears. Soft and cool as a white lotus, fragrant with *ketaki* blossoms, these breezes loosed from the heart of the clouds might be sipped from the hollow of one's hand. And this mountain, perfumed by *ketaka* flowers and with its *arjuna* trees in full bloom, is anointed by showers just as Sugrīva was, once his enemy was subdued. Wearing clouds

as their black antelope skins and streams as their sacred threads, the mountains, with wind murmuring in their caves, are like brahmans reciting.

[11–15] “The sky, lashed by lightning as if by golden whips, makes thundering sounds within, as if in pain. Flickering against dark clouds, the lightning looks to me like poor Vaidehī trembling in Rāvaṇa’s grasp. Spread with clouds so that the moon, maker of night, and planets have vanished, the sky is darkened in all directions, favoring lovers. And look at the flowering *kuṭaja* trees standing on the mountainsides, veiled in places by mist, delighted by the coming of the rain. They inflame my love, Saumitri, though I am overcome by grief. Now the dust has settled, the breeze is cool, the spread of summer’s ills has ceased, the expeditions of kings have halted, and men absent from home return to their own countries.

[16–20] “The *haṃsas*, who yearn to live on Lake Mānasa, have started off. The *cakravāka* birds are now united with their beloved mates. On roads damaged by constant rains, carts can no longer move about. Here visible, there invisible, the sky scattered with clouds looks like a calm sea obscured here and there by mountains. To the accompaniment of peacocks’ cries, the hill-streams swiftly bear along the fresh rainwater, red with ore from the mountains, and mingled with *sarja* and *kadamba* blossoms. Black as bees, the succulent fruit of the *jambū* tree can be eaten to one’s heart’s content, while the many-colored mango fruits shaken by the wind fall to the ground, fully ripe. With lightning for banners and rows of *balāka* cranes for garlands, the clouds, resembling majestic mountain peaks, emit deep rumblings like maddened elephants trumpeting excitedly in battle.

[21–25] “Longing for clouds, a row of joyous *balāka* cranes flying along together looks like a hanging garland of the finest white lotuses strung across the sky, swaying in the breeze. Gently sleep approaches Keśava, swiftly the river approaches the sea, joyfully the female *balāka* crane approaches the cloud, eagerly the woman in love approaches her beloved. The forests are now filled with peacocks dancing, the boughs of the *kadamba* tree are now filled with blossoms, bulls and their cows alike are now filled with desire, and the earth is now filled with the beauty of its crops and forests. Rivers flow, clouds rain, rutting elephants trumpet, forests glisten, parted lovers pine, peacocks dance, and monkeys rejoice. Overjoyed at smelling the fragrance of *ketaka* flowers, stirred by the sound

of cascading water in forest waterfalls, rutting elephants cry excitedly along with the peacocks.

[26–30] “Battered by the downpour of rain, bees clinging to *kadamba* branches gradually lose the deep intoxication so quickly gained from flower nectar. The boughs of the *jambū* tree, with their full-grown fruits brimming with juice and dark as mounds of charcoal, look as if swarms of black bees had alighted on them. Making loud, deep roars, the storm clouds decked with lightning-banners are like elephants ready for battle. Wandering in mountain forests, the majestic elephant in rut who has set out on his way eager for battle turns back upon hearing the roar of the clouds, thinking he hears a rival elephant. Falling like pearls bestowed by the lord of gods, bright raindrops cling in leaf-cups, where thirsty birds with faded wings drink with delight.

[31–35] “Massed against other dark clouds, dark clouds full of fresh water look like firmly rooted mountains burned by forest fires seen against other mountains burned by forest fires. Lords of elephants are in rut, lords of cattle are overjoyed, lords of forest beasts are tranquil, lords of mountains are charming, lords of men are at rest, and the lord of gods is at play with the water-bearing clouds. The expeditions of kings have ceased, their armies turn back. Hostilities and roads are equally blocked by water. In the month of Prauṣṭhapada, the time for study has now come for Sāmaga brahmans wishing to learn the *veda*. With work completed on his dwellings and with his stores assembled, Bharata, lord of Kosala, has surely undertaken some vow on the full-moon day of Āṣāḍha.

[36–40] “As the Sarayū River now becomes full, its current swells, as will the cheers of Ayodhyā’s people when they see me return. During these bountiful rains, Sugrīva, established in his great kingdom, his enemy conquered, is enjoying pleasure with his wives. But deprived of my great kingdom and robbed of my wife, I have been broken like a sodden riverbank, Lakṣmaṇa. Thus, my vast grief and these rains, which are slow to pass, and my mighty enemy Rāvaṇa all seem without end to me. When I saw that roads were impassable and an expedition impossible, I asked for nothing, even though Sugrīva bowed in submission.

[41–44] “Moreover, given the magnitude of my undertaking, I did not wish to ask anything of the exhausted monkey who was at long last reunited with his wives. No doubt when he has rested, Sugrīva himself will realize

that the time has come and will recognize his obligation. Therefore, you who bear auspicious marks, I keep awaiting the proper time, watching for both Sugrīva and the rivers to become favorable. For a service rendered obliges a warrior to repay the service. The ungrateful man who does not do so wounds the heart of virtuous people."

[45–46] Thus addressed, Lakṣmaṇa reflected and approved that speech and then, with palms cupped, spoke to handsome Rāma, showing his own correct view: "Lord of men, before long the king of tawny monkeys will do all that you desire, just as you have said. You must endure the falling rain, waiting for autumn, intent upon the destruction of your enemy."

Sarga 28

[1–8] Hanumān observed the clear sky free of clouds and lightning, spread with lovely light, and resounding with the cries of *sārasa* cranes. He also observed Sugrīva with his abundant wealth, doing little to accumulate wealth or religious merit, his mind entirely given over to wicked ways; his objective complete, his goals accomplished; always taking pleasure in women, obtaining all his cherished wishes and his own cherished wife, and also Tārā whom he had coveted. Diverting himself night and day, his object achieved, his suffering ended, he was enjoying himself like the lord of gods in the Nandana garden with the hosts of *apsarases*. Addicted to sensual behavior, relegating his duties to his ministers, and not overseeing his ministers, his command over the kingdom was destroyed. So the son of Māruta, who knew the real nature of things and had decided what needed to be done, who knew what was right for particular occasions, and who knew correct speech, propitiated with sweet, pleasing, and well-reasoned words the lord of the tawny monkeys who knew true speech. He approached the lord of the tawny monkeys who was full of love and affection for him and was convinced of his trustworthiness, and then spoke these words, which were beneficial, true, and salutary and were conciliatory, righteous, meaningful, and politic:

[9–12] "You have obtained kingship and fame and increased the royal majesty of your family. It only remains for you to support your allies, and this you must do. For if one always deals with allies correctly and at the proper time, then one's kingdom and glory and splendor increase. He who has treasury, scepter, allies, and self united in proper balance enjoys great

sovereignty, lord of the earth. Your conduct is virtuous and you keep to a path free of danger. Therefore, you should duly accomplish your ally's purpose for the sake of what is proper.

[13–16] "But he who attends to his ally's purpose when the right time has passed does not serve his ally's purpose even if he accomplishes great things. Therefore, you must conduct a search for Vaidehī. You must do this for Rāghava, heroic foe-tamer, for time is passing. Even though he is in a hurry and knows that time is of the essence, that wise man does not remind you that time is passing, for he is obedient to your will, king. Rāghava is the head of his flourishing family and is an enduring friend. His might is immeasurable and he himself is incomparable in his virtues.

[17–20] "Attend to his interests, then; he has already attended to yours. Lord of tawny monkeys, you should give orders to the most excellent of the tawny monkeys. For the proper time has not yet run out if only you act without further urging. But if the undertaking must still be urged upon you, then the right time will have passed. You should attend to the interests even of someone who does nothing for you, lord of tawny monkeys, not to mention someone who has obligated you by giving you kingship and wealth. Lord of the hosts of apes and monkeys, you are powerful and valiant. Why then do you hesitate about ordering this favor to be done for Dāśarathi?

[21–26] "Granted, with his own arrows Dāśarathi can subdue gods, *asuras*, and great serpents. Still, he is waiting for your promise to be kept. Risking his life without hesitation, he did a favor for you. So for him, we must search this earth or the very heavens for Vaidehī. Neither gods nor *gandharvas* nor *asuras* nor *yakṣas* nor the host of Maruts could frighten him, much less *rākṣasas*. You had a favor done for you first by powerful Rāma; therefore, lord of tawny monkeys, you should with all your heart do a favor for him. If you so command, lord of monkeys, none of us will slacken his pace, whether on earth or on water, in the underworld or even up in the sky. Therefore, command who is to stay where to do what for you. For you have more than ten million unassailable tawny monkeys, blameless king."

[27–32] Upon hearing this correct speech communicated at the proper time, mighty Sugrīva made an excellent decision. He ordered respected Nīla, always diligent, to gather all his armies from every quarter,

commanding: “See to it that my entire army with its vanguards and all the troop leaders assemble without delay. And let the swift and resolute leaping monkeys who guard the outposts quickly assemble the troops at my command. And afterward you yourself must review the troops. Any monkey who has not reached here in fifteen days will be punished by death. Let there be no doubt about this. You and Añgada are to go to the monkey elders concerning the orders upon which I have decided.” Then, when the vigorous lord of those bulls among tawny monkeys had made these arrangements, he entered his dwelling.

Sarga 29

[1–5] After Sugrīva had entered his cave, and when the sky was free of clouds, Rāma, who had waited through the rainy season, was oppressed by grief and desire. He gazed at the clear sky, the white circle of the moon, and the autumnal night washed with moonlight. Realizing that Sugrīva was given over to lust, that Janaka’s daughter was lost, and that the proper time had passed by, he was so deeply tormented that he fainted. Then, after a moment, wise Rāghava regained consciousness and thought about Vaidehī, who was always in his heart. Seated on the mountaintop bright with gold and minerals, he gazed at the autumnal sky, and his thoughts were fixed on his beloved.

[6–13] And as he gazed at that clear sky free of clouds and lightning, resounding with the calls of the *sārasa* cranes, he lamented in a pained voice: “My young wife, whose voice is like the call of the *sārasa* cranes, used to enjoy the calls of the *sārasa* cranes in our hermitage; how can she find enjoyment now? And how can my young wife enjoy the sight of flowering *asana* trees bright as gold, when she looks about and doesn’t see me? Soft-voiced, lovely in every limb, she used to awaken at the sound of the *kalahaṃsas*. What wakes her now? When she hears the call of the *cakravāka* birds and their mates, how can my lotus-eyed wife survive? Without that fawn-eyed woman, I find no happiness now in wandering through woods and forests, near lakes, rivers, and ponds. I hope that lovely woman, so young and far from me, is not deeply tormented by love endlessly renewed by autumn’s charms.” The king’s son, best of men, kept lamenting in this way, like a *sārañga* bird asking for water from Indra, lord of the thirty gods.

[14–18] Then fortunate Lakṣmaṇa, who had been ranging over the beautiful mountainsides in search of fruit, returned and saw his elder brother. When he saw him alone in that solitary place, distraught and filled with unbearable cares, wise Saumitri was wretched with anguish because of his brother's dejection, and he said to Rāma: "Elder brother, what is the use of submitting to love? What is the good of defeating your own manliness? Composure can always be achieved. What is the good of turning away from endeavor now? Undaunted warrior, exert yourself in your task, make your mind serene, use your time for concentration and exertion, and make these things and your ally's strength a cause of success, achieved by your own actions. Nor can another easily possess Jānakī when you are her lord, lord of the dynasty of Manu. No one approaches the blazing flame of a fire without being burned, most worthy of warriors."

[19–20] Rāma then addressed unassailable Lakṣmaṇa, who bore auspicious marks, with these characteristic words that were beneficial, salutary, consistent with statesmanship, conciliatory, righteous, and full of meaning: "Undoubtedly we must look after our undertaking. We must carry out specific actions. We must certainly give thought to the outcome of the difficult undertaking we have begun, prince."

[21–26] Then Rāma spoke to Lakṣmaṇa, his mouth becoming dry with grief as he thought again of lotus-eyed Maithilī: "Thousand-eyed Indra has satisfied the earth with water and ripened the crops. Now he has settled down, his work accomplished. Passing before mountains and trees with a deep, pleasing sound, the clouds released their water and are now exhausted, prince. Water-bearing clouds dark as blue-lotus petals had darkened the ten directions. Now, like elephants no longer in rut, their violence is calmed. High up, the violent water-bearing storm-winds fragrant with *kuṭaja* and *arjuna* blossoms have passed by and now are still, gentle brother. Clouds, elephants, peacocks, and waterfalls have all at once ceased their sounds, blameless Lakṣmaṇa.

[27–31] "The mountains have been washed spotless by great clouds and their glittering peaks now shine as if bathed in moonbeams. Little by little the autumnal rivers reveal their sandbanks, just as young women, bashful in their first sexual encounter, reveal their loins. With their waters now clear, resounding with the cries of ospreys and crowded with hosts of *cakravāka* birds, the lakes look lovely, gentle brother. For kings eager to conquer and

bitterly hostile toward one another, the time for exertion has arrived, gentle prince. Now is the time when kings make their first military expeditions, prince, yet I see neither Sugrīva nor any such preparation by him.

[32–35] "I am tormented with grief at not seeing Sītā, so for me the four rainy months have passed as if they were a hundred years, gentle brother. Although I am tortured by sorrow, deprived of my beloved, robbed of my kingdom, and in exile, King Sugrīva shows me no compassion, Lakṣmaṇa, thinking: 'Without a protector, deprived of his kingdom, far from home, assailed by Rāvaṇa, miserable and lovesick, Rāma has come to me for help.' Such are the reasons why the wicked-minded king of monkeys, Sugrīva, slights me, gentle brother, scorcher of your foes.

[36–40] "Now that he has achieved his own object, this evil-minded monkey, who himself specified the time for Sītā's search, disregards the agreement he made. Enter Kiṣkindhā and speak in my name to that bull among monkeys, Sugrīva, that fool intent on vulgar pleasures. He who promises and then destroys the hopes of worthy suppliants who have moreover previously rendered services is the vilest man in the world. But he who accepts as an oath his own spoken word, whether for good or for evil, is a hero and the best of men. Even carrion eaters will not consume the dead bodies of those ingrates who, once their own object is achieved, will not assist their friends whose objects are still unachieved.

[41–45] "He must want to see my golden-backed bow flash like a streak of lightning when I bend it in combat. He must want to hear again the terrible clash of the bowstring against my armguard, which booms like a thunderbolt when I am angry in battle. Granted that his valor is known to be so great; still, with you as my companion, heroic prince, I should have no worry. Now that his object is achieved, the lord of leaping monkeys does not acknowledge the agreement on account of which I made this effort, conqueror of enemy cities. Though he promised the end of the rains as the agreed-upon time, the lord of tawny monkeys is enjoying himself and does not notice that the four months have passed.

[46–52] "Amusing himself with his ministers and his council, Sugrīva spends all his time drinking. He has no pity on us, though we are wretched with grief. Go, dear boy, and tell Sugrīva the nature of my anger. And, mighty one, you should say these words to him: 'The path Vālin traveled when he died is not closed. Stand by your agreement, Sugrīva, lest you

follow in Vālin's path. I slew Vālin alone with my arrow in battle. But if you neglect your oath, I shall kill your entire family along with you.' So, bull among men, say to him whatever is helpful given the state of affairs. Make haste, best of men: time is running out. Tell him: 'Keep the promise you made me, lord of monkeys, heeding the immemorial code of righteous conduct, lest I shoot you dead with my arrows and send you today to Yama's abode to see Vālin.' " When this lord of the race of men, whose might was terrible, saw that his dejected older brother was addressing him repeatedly with sharply increasing anger, he made a harsh decision about the lord of the tawny monkeys.

Sarga 30

[1–4] Rāma's high-spirited younger brother, son of the lord of men, replied to his dejected, lovesick elder brother, son of a king of men, who was overcome with grief and whose anger had greatly increased: "The monkey will not keep to virtuous conduct. He will not keep in mind the connection between your efforts and his rewards. And so it is that he does not get started. He will not long enjoy the royal power of the monkey kingdom. Attached to vulgar pleasures because his mind is corrupted, he has no inclination to repay your favor, warrior. Let him die and behold his older brother Vālin. A kingdom should not be given to someone so devoid of virtues. I cannot contain my violent anger. I shall kill faithless Sugrīva today. Let Vālin's son and the heroic tawny monkeys conduct the search for the king's wife."

[5–8] After announcing his intention, he seized his bow and was rushing off in a terrible rage for battle. But Rāma, slayer of enemy warriors, addressed him with these circumspect and courteous words: "Surely someone like you should not do such evil in this world. He who destroys evil by virtue is a hero and the best of men. As a man of honorable conduct, Lakṣmaṇa, you must not choose this evil now. Pursue toward Sugrīva that affection and friendship we previously followed. With conciliatory words, avoiding harshness, you must tell Sugrīva that time has run out."

[9–15] Duly instructed in this matter by his elder brother, Lakṣmaṇa, that bull among men, slayer of enemy warriors, entered the city. Then Lakṣmaṇa, wise, honest minded, devoted to his brother's pleasure and well-being, went to the monkey's dwelling in a fury, resembling Kāla, the ender

of all things. Like Mount Mandara with its high peak, he bore a bow like a mountain peak, bright as a rainbow. Equal to Bṛhaspati in intelligence, Rāma's younger brother Lakṣmaṇa, doing as he was told, reflected on the speech he would make, the reply to it, and his reply to that. Then, enveloped by the fire of his own wrath aroused by his brother's desire and anger, he advanced like a raging tempest. Violently toppling many *sāla*, *tāla*, and *aśvakarṇa* trees, impetuously overturning other trees and mountain peaks, and crushing rocks with his feet like a swift-moving elephant, he raced on, making long strides in keeping with his mission.

[16–19] There, in a gap in the mountains, that tiger of the Ikṣvākus saw Kiṣkindhā, the great and inaccessible citadel of the king of the tawny monkeys, crowded with troops. His lip trembling with anger at Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa saw dreadful monkeys moving about outside Kiṣkindhā. In the space between the mountains, monkeys as big as elephants clutched mountain peaks and full-grown trees by the hundreds. Now, when he saw that the tawny monkeys had seized weapons, Lakṣmaṇa's anger redoubled, like a fire with ample fuel.

[20–25] When those leaping monkeys saw that he was furious and that he resembled Kāla, Mṛtyu, or the end of a cosmic era, they ran off by the hundreds in every direction, their limbs gripped by fear. Then those bulls among tawny monkeys entered Sugrīva's dwelling and reported Lakṣmaṇa's arrival and his wrath. But the lustful, infatuated bull among monkeys was secluded with Tārā and did not hear the words of those monkey warriors. Instructed by the ministers, terrifying tawny monkeys as big as mountains, elephants, or clouds then went forth from the city. With claws and fangs for weapons, all were terrible, all were hideous with deformed faces, and all were as bold as tigers. Some had the strength of ten elephants, some ten times that, and some had the valor of a thousand elephants.

[26–30] In his anger, Lakṣmaṇa gazed upon unassailable Kiṣkindhā, entirely surrounded by mighty monkeys with trees in their hands. Then all those immensely powerful tawny monkeys came out beyond the moat surrounding the ramparts and stood there in full view. That self-possessed warrior, recalling Sugrīva's dereliction and the suffering of his own elder brother, once again gave way to anger. Red-eyed with anger and sighing long, hot sighs, that tiger among men resembled fire, the purifier, shrouded

in smoke. With his arrowheads like darting tongues, his bow like coils, and his inner strength like a store of venom, he resembled a five-headed serpent.

[31–33] As he approached this man who was enflamed like the fire of universal destruction and who was like some angry serpent lord, Aṅgada was terrified and greatly dismayed. His eyes reddened with anger, Lakṣmaṇa, whose fame was great, instructed Aṅgada: "Dear child, announce my arrival to Sugrīva with these words: 'Rāma's younger brother Lakṣmaṇa, subduer of his foes, is here to see you. Tormented by his brother's misfortune, he is standing at the gate.' "

[34–38] When he heard Lakṣmaṇa's speech, Aṅgada, overcome with grief, approached his father and said, "Saumitri is here." But when the monkey warriors saw Lakṣmaṇa, all at once, right before him they roared a roar like that of a lion or of a mighty stream, or like the sound of the *vajra* or a thunderbolt. At that loud noise the monkey awoke, red-eyed and unsteady with drunkenness, his garlands and ornaments in disarray. Now, when they heard Aṅgada's words, two of the monkey king's counselors, who were respected and noble looking, accompanied him. Those two counselors, Plakṣa and Prabhāva, announced that Lakṣmaṇa had arrived to speak of various matters concerning righteousness and statecraft.

[39–43] Soothing him with speeches certain to be conciliatory, they respectfully attended the seated Sugrīva as if he were Śakra, lord of the Maruts, saying: "The illustrious brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, true to their promise, worthy of kingship and conferring kingship, have become your friends. One of them, Lakṣmaṇa, is standing at the gate, bow in hand. Trembling in fear of him, the monkeys are screeching. Rāghava's brother Lakṣmaṇa is here. He has arrived at Rāma's command, with Rāma's words as his charioteer and with his own determination as his chariot. You and your son and your kinsmen must bow your heads to him. You must stand by your agreement, king. You must be faithful to your promise."

Sarga 31

[1–4] When self-possessed Sugrīva, along with his ministers, heard Aṅgada's words and heard that Lakṣmaṇa was angry, he rose from his seat. Experienced and thoroughly versed in counsel, weighing his alternatives, he spoke these words to his ministers who understood counsel: "I have said nothing wrong, nor have I done anything wrong. I wonder, then, why

Rāghava's brother Lakṣmaṇa is so angry? Evil-hearted enemies, always looking for my weak spots, must have reported nonexistent misdeeds of mine to Rāghava's younger brother.

[5–8] "So to start with, all of you must reach some conclusion about this, using your own judgment, gradually, cleverly, and in keeping with the rules of proper conduct. I am by no means afraid of Lakṣmaṇa or of Rāghava, but a friend angry without grounds does give rise to alarm. It is always easy to make a friend but hard to keep one. Since feelings do not endure, affection breaks down over small things. It is for this reason that I am frightened, for I really cannot repay the service rendered to me by great Rāma."

[9–12] Thus addressed by Sugrīva, Hanumān, bull among tawny monkeys, stated his own conjecture in the midst of the monkey counselors: "It is no wonder at all that you cannot forget the affectionate good deed done as a service to you, lord of the hosts of tawny monkeys. For in order to please you, heroic Rāghava cast fear far away and killed Vālin, who was equal in prowess to Śakra. There is no doubt that it is entirely due to his affection that Rāghava is angry and has sent his brother Lakṣmaṇa, bestower of good fortune.

[13–17] "Best of those who understand time, you have been inattentive and did not realize the time. Propitious autumn has begun, lush with flowering *saptacchada* trees. There are bright planets and stars in the heavens now that the clouds have disappeared. The sky is clear in all directions, and so are the rivers and lakes. But still you do not realize that the time for your endeavor has arrived, bull among tawny monkeys. Since you are clearly negligent, Lakṣmaṇa has come. So now you must tolerate from the mouth of another man the harsh words of great Rāghava, who is suffering because his wife has been taken. And since you have committed an offense, I see no alternative for you but to propitiate Lakṣmaṇa with cupped palms.

[18–22] "A king needs to be told what is beneficial by his appointed counselors. For that reason, I have put aside fear to speak these well-considered words. For when Rāghava is angered, he can, by raising his bow, bring under his power the whole world with its gods, *asuras*, and *gandharvas*. [b]It is not proper, particularly for someone who is grateful, who remembers a past favor, to anger a person who must be propitiated again. You, your son, and your close friends must bow your heads to him. Then

you must honor your agreement, king, as submissive to him as a wife to her husband. King of monkeys, it is not right for you to reject the instruction of Rāma and his younger brother, even in your mind. For your mind surely knows the human strength of Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa, powerful as the lord of the gods.”

Sarga 32

[1–3] Then, when he was summoned, Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy warriors, entered the terrible cave Kiṣkindhā as Rāma had commanded. At the sight of Lakṣmaṇa, the huge and powerful tawny monkey stationed at the gates all stood with their hands cupped in reverence. Perceiving that Daśaratha’s son was breathing heavily in anger, the tawny monkeys were frightened and did not close in around him.

[4–8] Majestic Lakṣmaṇa saw that delightful, heavenly, great cave made of jewels, filled with jewels, crowded with mansions and palaces, resplendent with all sorts of wares. The cave with its blossoming groves was resplendent with blossoming trees, whose fruits satisfied every desire. It was splendid with beautiful monkeys wearing heavenly garlands and clothing, for these were the sons of gods and *gandharvas* and could change form at will. The principal streets were fragrant with the scents of sweet-smelling sandal, aloes, and *padma*, and of *maireya* and *madhu* wines; and there were many-storied palaces as solid as Mount Meru or the Vindhya mountains. And Rāghava saw there unsullied mountain streams.

[9–13] On the royal highway Lakṣmaṇa saw Aṅgada’s lovely house and the fine, substantial houses of those great and eminent monkeys Mainda, Dvivida, Gavaya, Gavākṣa, Gaja, and Śarabha; Vidyunmāla, Saṃpāti, Sūryākṣa, Hanumān, Vīrabāhu, and great Nala; Kumuda, Suṣeṇa, Tāra, and Jāmbavān too; Dadhivaktra, Nīla, Supāṭala, and Sunetra. Their houses were as bright as white clouds and strung with heavenly garlands. They were full of wealth and grain and splendid with the most beautiful women.

[14–17] Enclosed by a white stone rampart was the lovely but unapproachable house of the lord of monkeys, which was like great Indra’s abode, with white palace turrets like Kailāsa’s peaks, resplendent with blossoming trees whose fruits satisfied every desire, with majestic trees given by great Indra. It had trees with heavenly blossoms and fruits, which were delightful, like dark clouds, giving cool shade. Its doorways were

flanked by powerful tawny monkeys with weapons in hand. It was bright, covered with heavenly garlands, and had an arched gateway of pure gold.

[18–21] Unhindered, mighty Saumitri entered Sugrīva's lovely house as the bright sun enters a great cloud. Passing seven enclosures filled with chariots and seats, righteous Lakṣmaṇa saw the large, well-guarded women's quarters, resplendent everywhere with beds of gold and silver and with many fine seats furnished with expensive cushions. As he entered, he heard continuous sweet music, accompanied by the sound of stringed instruments, in which words and syllables were matched to the singing.

[22–24] And within Sugrīva's palace, mighty Lakṣmaṇa saw many women of every description, proud of their beauty and youth. Noble in birth, they were ornamented with the finest ornaments. Their garlands were made of bright-colored flowers, and they were absorbed in making exquisite garlands. Lakṣmaṇa saw them and noticed also Sugrīva's satisfied, attentive servants wearing elegant clothing.

[25–27] Then he saw glorious Sugrīva seated on a splendid golden throne furnished with expensive cushions. He was as bright as the sun, his appearance was heavenly, and his body glittered with heavenly ornaments. Surrounded by beautiful women who were decked in heavenly ornaments and garlands, and wearing heavenly garlands and clothing himself, he was as invincible as great Indra. Tightly embracing Rumā, seated on his throne, his color that of finest gold, the large-eyed hero Sugrīva gazed at large-eyed, dauntless Saumitri.

Sarga 33

[1–5] When Sugrīva saw Lakṣmaṇa, that bull among men, enter unchecked and angry, his mind was troubled. He saw that Daśaratha's son, aggrieved at his brother's misfortune, was burning as it were with his blazing energy and breathing hard in his rage. The foremost of tawny monkeys, great Sugrīva, left his golden throne, rising up like great Indra's beautifully adorned flagstaff. As Sugrīva arose, the women led by Rumā rose with him, like the host of stars following the full moon into the heavens. Majestic, his eyes reddened, he swayed. Then, with palms cupped, he stood firm, like the great wish-fulfilling tree.

[6–10] Lakṣmaṇa spoke angrily to Sugrīva, who stood with Rumā in the midst of the women, like the moon among the stars: "A well-born, powerful

king whose passions are controlled, who is grateful, compassionate, and truthful, is much esteemed in this world. But who is more malicious than that king bent on unrighteousness who makes a false promise to friends who have helped him? By lying about a horse, a man in effect kills a hundred. By lying about a cow, he kills a thousand. But it is himself and his kinsmen he kills when he lies about another man. He who does not repay his friends when his own object is already achieved is an ingrate, fit to be killed by all beings, lord of leaping monkeys.

[11–15] "This *śloka* revered by all people was sung by Brahmā, angry at seeing an ingrate. Listen to it, leaping monkey: 'Virtuous men have prescribed atonements for the brahman-killer, the drinker of wine, the thief, and the breaker of vows; but for the ingrate there is no atonement.' You are ignoble, monkey, an ingrate and a liar; for you do not repay Rāma though your own object is already achieved. Surely, monkey, since your own object is achieved, you must make an effort to look for Sītā if you wish to repay Rāma's service. You are addicted to vulgar pleasures and false to your promise. Rāma did not realize you were a snake croaking like a frog.

[16–19] "It was through great, illustrious, compassionate Rāma that you, who are evil and wicked, obtained the kingship of the tawny monkeys. If you do not acknowledge the service rendered by Rāma, who is tireless in action, you will at once, shot dead with sharp arrows, see Vālin. The path Vālin traveled when he died is not closed. Stand by your agreement, Sugrīva, lest you follow in Vālin's path. It must be that since you cannot see the arrows that fall like thunderbolts from the bow of that best of Ikṣvākus, you are content to pursue pleasure and do not give even a thought to what needs to be done for Rāma."

Sarga 34

[1–4] As Sumitrā's son Lakṣmaṇa spoke in that fashion, he seemed ablaze with power. Then Tārā, her face bright as the lord of stars, said to him: "One should not address the lord of the tawny monkeys in this manner, Lakṣmaṇa. He does not deserve to hear harsh words, especially from your mouth. Sugrīva is not at all ungrateful or deceitful or pitiless. The lord of monkeys does not tell lies, hero, nor is he dishonest. Nor has this heroic monkey Sugrīva forgotten that Rāma rendered a service impossible for any other to accomplish in battle, hero.

[5–8] “It is through Rāma’s favor that Sugrīva has now obtained renown, the everlasting kingship of the monkeys, as well as Rumā and me, scorcher of your foes. He rested most unhappily before; so now that he has achieved this extreme happiness, like the sage Viśvāmitra he does not realize what the time is. For they say that the great sage, righteous Viśvāmitra, was so attached to the *apsaras* Ghṛtācī that he thought ten years to be but a single day, Lakṣmaṇa. If even powerful Viśvāmitra, who best understands time, did not notice the passage of time, what can you expect from an ordinary being?

[9–14] “Rāma should pardon Sugrīva, who is only following his bodily nature, and who, although exhausted, is not yet sated with sensual pleasures, Lakṣmaṇa. And you, my dear Lakṣmaṇa, should not rashly succumb to anger like a common man, without knowing the true state of affairs. For men of strong character like you, bull among men, do not rashly succumb to the power of anger without reflection. I beseech you earnestly for Sugrīva’s sake. You know what is right. Please give up your great agitation born of anger. I believe that to please Rāma, Sugrīva would give up Rumā, me, the monkey kingdom, and his wealth, grain, and riches. Sugrīva will kill Rāvaṇa in battle and reunite Rāghava and Sītā, like the hare-marked moon and his consort, the constellation Rohiṇī.

[15–18] “They say that in Laṅkā there are one thousand times one billion and thirty-six times one hundred, thirty-six times one thousand, and thirty-six times ten thousand *rākṣasas*. And without killing those unassailable *rākṣasas*, who can change form at will, one cannot kill Rāvaṇa, who has carried off Maithilī. For those *rākṣasas* and cruel Rāvaṇa cannot be slain in battle without an ally, Lakṣmaṇa, particularly Sugrīva. That is what Vālin, the lord of the tawny monkeys, indicated, and he was well informed. But my knowledge is not direct: I am telling you only what I heard from him.

[19–23] “In order to provide you with allies in battle, bulls among monkeys have been dispatched to bring many monkeys, the leaders of the troops of tawny monkey. And since he is still awaiting those mighty, valiant monkeys, the lord of monkeys cannot set out to accomplish Rāghava’s purpose. Sugrīva already issued a decree according to which all those mighty monkeys should be arriving today, Saumitri. Ten billion apes, a billion langurs, and many millions of monkeys with blazing power will come to you today, Kākutstha. So give up your anger, subduer of your foes.

For when they see this face of yours and your eyes blood-red with rage, all the wives of the lords of the tawny monkeys fear their previous danger and can find no peace of mind."

Sarga 35

[1–3] After Tārā had addressed him in those polite words consistent with righteousness, Saumitri, who was tender by nature, accepted her words. And once those words had been accepted, the lord of the hosts of tawny monkey put aside his great terror of Lakṣmaṇa as one might put aside a wet garment. Then Sugrīva, lord of monkeys, tore off the great, wonderful garland of many properties that was around his neck, and he was free of his intoxication.

[4–6] Sugrīva, best of all monkeys, spoke conciliatory words, delighting Lakṣmaṇa whose power was terrifying: "My lost majesty and glory and the everlasting kingship of the monkeys—all this I have regained through Rāma's favor, Saumitri. Heroic tamer of foes, who could ever repay such valor as that of this king renowned for his deeds?

[7–11] "Righteous Rāghava will regain Sītā and will kill Rāvaṇa by his own power. I shall be merely his ally. What need has he of an ally when with a single arrow he pierced seven great trees, a mountain, and even the earth itself? When the mere sound of his twanging bow makes the earth and its mountains tremble, Lakṣmaṇa, what need has he of allies? When the lord of men goes forth to kill his enemy Rāvaṇa, along with his attendants, bull among men, I shall merely follow in his train. If I, who am his servant, have committed any transgression, let it be forgiven out of trust or affection. All servants make mistakes."

[12–15] As great Sugrīva spoke in this way, Lakṣmaṇa was pleased and said affectionately: "With you above all as his courteous protector, lord of monkeys, my brother has a true protector in every way, Sugrīva. By virtue of your dignity and your extreme purity, Sugrīva, you are worthy of enjoying the unsurpassed majesty of the kingship over the monkeys. With you as his ally, valorous Rāma will soon kill his enemies in battle, Sugrīva. There is no doubt about that.

[16–20] "You are grateful and righteous and never turn back in battle, Sugrīva. What you say is fitting and proper. Apart from you and my elder brother, what other powerful person who recognizes his own faults is able

to speak of them, best of monkeys? You are Rāma's equal in valor and strength, and the gods have given you to be his ally for a long time to come, bull among tawny monkeys. Nevertheless, hero, you must leave this place at once with me and console your friend, who is suffering because of his wife's abduction. Please forgive me if, after hearing what Rāma said when he was overcome with grief, I spoke harsh words to you."

Sarga 36

[1–10] When great Lakṣmaṇa had addressed him in this fashion, Sugrīva said these words to his minister Hanumān, who stood beside him: "You must immediately summon all the monkeys on earth: those who live on the peaks of the five mountains Mahendra, Himalaya, Vindhya, Kailāsa, and white-peaked Mandara; and those who dwell in the west near the seashore on mountains glittering all over with the color of the newly risen sun; and those bulls among tawny monkeys who shelter in the dreadful forests of *padma* and *tāla* trees on the mountain that is the sun's dwelling and that resembles a rain cloud at twilight; and those leaping monkeys strong as elephants, black as collyrium or storm clouds, who live on the Añjana mountain; and those monkeys bright as gold dwelling in caves of red arsenic ore on the flanks of Mount Meru, and those inhabiting the Dhūmra mountain; and those leaping monkeys of terrifying power who are the color of the newly risen sun and drink honey-wine on the great Aruṇa mountain; and those who inhabit the great, fragrant, delightful forests and everywhere haunt the ascetics' charming forest groves. Using such devices as bribery and conciliation, send forth your monkeys at once. And send forth other tawny monkeys as well to hasten those very swift messengers I dispatched previously.

[11–15] "Then quickly bring at my command all those monkeys who, absorbed in pleasures, are too long in coming. Any wicked ones who do not come at my command within ten days are to be executed as transgressors of their king's orders. Now let the hundreds and thousands and tens of millions of lions among monkeys who abide by my wishes depart in all directions at my command. Let those excellent and frightful-looking monkeys go forth from here at my command, as if blocking out the sky like clouds or mountains. Let all monkeys who know their haunts swiftly go and bring at my command all the tawny monkeys on earth."

[16–18] Upon hearing the monkey king's words, the wind god's son dispatched valiant monkeys in every direction. Dispatched by the king, those monkeys set out at that very moment into the sky, where Viṣṇu stepped, traveling along the path of birds and heavenly bodies. For Rāma's sake those monkeys urged on all the monkeys who dwelt by the oceans, on the mountains, in the forests, and near the rivers.

[19–26] When these monkeys heard the orders of Sugrīva, their king of kings, who was like Mṛtyu or Kāla, they came, fearful of Sugrīva. So down from their mountain three times ten million very swift leaping monkeys, black as collyrium, came to the spot where Rāghava was. And ten times ten million, bright as pure gold, who delighted in that best of mountains where the sun sets, came down from it. And then from the peaks of Mount Kailāsa there came a thousand times ten million monkeys lustrous as a lion's mane. Then came a thousand thousands of ten millions, who dwelt in the Himalayas, living on fruits and roots. And down from the Vindhya mountains rushed thousands of ten millions of terrifying monkeys, as red as Mars, whose deeds were frightful. And there was an untold number of those who lived on the shore of the ocean of milk, dwelling in forests of *tamāla* trees and eating coconuts. From the forests, caves, and rivers came a swift monkey army, seeming to swallow up the sun, maker of day.

[27–31] Now those heroic monkeys who had gone to hasten all the other monkeys saw the mountain Himalaya with its great trees. On that charming best of mountains there was long ago a lovely, wonderful sacrifice for Maheśvara that gratified the hearts of all the gods. There the monkeys saw roots and fruits, sweet as the nectar of the gods, which were produced from the overflowing of the food offered at that sacrifice. Whoever eats even once those delightful, divine roots and fruits produced from that sacrificial food remains satisfied for a month. The leaders of the troops of monkeys, who lived on fruit, took those divine roots and fruits and divine herbs.

[32–37] And the monkeys who had gone there also brought from that place of sacrifice fragrant flowers in order to please Sugrīva. Then, having exhorted all the other monkeys on earth, all those excellent monkeys went off swiftly ahead of their troops. In a moment those swift-moving troop leaders speedily reached Kiṣkindhā, where the monkey Sugrīva was. Those monkeys took all the herbs, fruits, and roots and presented them to him with these words: "We have gone around to all the mountains, oceans, and

forests. All the monkeys on earth are coming at your command." When he heard this, Sugrīva, ruler of leaping monkeys, was delighted, and he accepted all their gifts with pleasure.

Sarga 37

[1–4] Sugrīva accepted all the gifts that were offered, and then, speaking kindly to those monkeys, he dismissed them all. When he had dismissed those heroic tawny monkeys, who had accomplished their mission, he felt as though he and mighty Rāghava had already achieved their object. Now Lakṣmaṇa spoke conciliatory words to Sugrīva, whose strength was terrible, delighting that best of all monkeys: "If it pleases you, gentle friend, depart from Kiṣkindhā." Upon hearing Lakṣmaṇa's well-spoken words, Sugrīva was highly pleased and said this: "So be it. We shall go. I must abide by your command."

[5–10] When Sugrīva had spoken in this way to Lakṣmaṇa, who bore auspicious marks, he dismissed Tārā and the other women. To those best of tawny monkeys Sugrīva loudly cried, "Come!" When they heard his words, all those tawny monkeys who were fit to see the women came quickly, their palms cupped in reverence. Radiant as the sun, the king then said to those who had come, "Monkeys, bring my palanquin at once!" Hearing his words, the swift-striding tawny monkeys brought his beautiful palanquin. When he saw that his palanquin had been brought, the king of monkeys said to Saumitri, "Climb in quickly, Lakṣmaṇa!"

[11–14] Having spoken in this fashion, Sugrīva together with Lakṣmaṇa climbed into his golden palanquin bright as the sun, which was borne by huge tawny monkeys. With a white umbrella carried over his head, and with white yak-tail fly whisks waving on all sides, hailed by the sound of conchs and *bherī* drums, and lauded by panegyrists, Sugrīva went forth, having attained unsurpassed royal majesty. Surrounded by many hundreds of fierce monkeys with weapons in hand, he proceeded to where Rāma was waiting.

[15–18] But once he reached that pleasant place where Rāma dwelt, glorious Sugrīva descended from his palanquin with Lakṣmaṇa. He approached Rāma with his palms cupped in reverence. And as he stood with palms cupped, the other monkeys did the same. When Rāma saw that vast army of monkeys like a pond full of lotus buds, he was pleased with Sugrīva. Rāghava raised up the lord of the tawny monkeys, who had fallen

at his feet with his head to the ground, and embraced him with great respect and affection.

[19–23] When righteous Rāma had embraced him, he said, “Be seated!” Then, when he saw him seated on the ground, he said these words: “He who distinguishes righteousness, wealth, and pleasure and always pursues each one at the proper time is indeed a king, heroic best of tawny monkeys. But he who neglects righteousness and wealth to pursue pleasure awakens only after he has fallen, like a man who sleeps on top of a tree. On the other hand, a king intent on killing his enemies and devoted to supporting his friends gains religious merit and enjoys the fruit of all three goals of life. The time has now come for effort, destroyer of enemies. Please consider this carefully with those tawny monkeys who are your counselors, lord of the tawny monkeys.”

[24–29] Addressed in this way, Sugrīva said these words to Rāma: “My lost majesty and glory and the everlasting kingship of the monkeys—all this I have regained through your favor, great-armed man. King and best of conquerors, he who would not repay what was done through your favor and your brother’s would be infamous among men. Now the monkey chieftains have come by the hundreds, bringing all the powerful monkeys on earth, slayer of your enemies. Vigilant apes and heroic langurs of frightful appearance, well acquainted with wildernesses, forests, and inaccessible places, Rāghava, and forest monkeys who are the sons of gods and *gandharvas* and can change their form at will—all are on the way, Rāghava, surrounded by their respective armies.

[30–34] “Scorcher of your foes, heroic leaping monkeys surrounded by hundreds and by ten thousands and by hundreds of thousands and by ten millions and by ten trillions; and forest monkeys surrounded by hundreds of millions and by hundreds of hundreds of millions, and by a thousand trillions and by ten thousand trillions; and tawny monkeys, leaders of troops of tawny monkeys, surrounded by one hundred trillions and by one hundred thousand trillions, who make their home on the Vindhya and Meru mountains, who themselves resemble Mount Meru and Mount Mandara, who possess the valor of great Indra—all these are coming, king. And those who come to you will surely kill the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa and his kinsmen in battle and will bring back Maithilī.” Then, as he considered this effort on the part of the heroic tawny monkey who was obedient to his orders, the

wise son of the ruler of the earth resembled in his joy a full-blown blue lotus.

Sarga 38

[1–7] As Sugrīva was speaking in this way with his palms cupped in reverence, Rāma, best of those who uphold righteousness, embraced him with both arms and replied: “It is not surprising, dear friend, that Indra showers rain upon the earth, that the thousand-rayed sun should drive the darkness from the sky, that the moon with its beams should illuminate the earth, or that someone like you, scorcher of your foes, should repay his friends. In the same way it is not surprising that what is best should be found in you, dear Sugrīva. I know that you always say what is pleasing. With you, my friend, as my protector, I shall conquer all my enemies in battle. You alone are my friend and ally. Please help me. That evil *rākṣasa* has seized Vaidehī only to destroy himself, just as Anuhlāda treacherously seized Puloman’s daughter Śacī. Before long I shall kill Rāvaṇa with sharp arrows, just as Indra of a hundred sacrifices, a slayer of his enemies, killed Puloman, Śacī’s proud father.”

[8–13] As they were conversing, dust began rising into the sky, veiling the fierce, hot brilliance of the thousand-rayed sun. All directions were obscured and thick with that dust, and the whole earth with its mountains, woods, and forests trembled. Suddenly the entire land was covered with countless mighty, sharp-fanged leaping monkeys as great as mountains. In the mere twinkling of an eye, it was covered by the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys with a hundred times ten million followers who could change form at will; by mighty tawny monkeys from the rivers, mountains, and oceans; and by others who were forest dwellers, roaring like rain clouds. Some were the color of the newly risen sun, while others were as pale as the moon. And there were monkeys as golden as lotus filaments, and white ones who made their home on Mount Meru.

[14–18] Then the majestic monkey hero named Śatabali appeared surrounded by ten thousand times ten million monkeys. Next Tārā’s mighty father, bright as a mountain of gold, appeared with many tens of thousands times ten million. Golden as a lotus filament, his face bright as the newly risen sun, the intelligent, most excellent of all monkeys, majestic Kesarin, Hanumān’s father, best of monkeys, now appeared, with his army of many

thousands of monkeys. The great king of the langurs, Gavākṣa of terrifying valor, appeared surrounded by a thousand times ten million monkeys.

[19–23] Next came Dhūmra, destroyer of his enemies, surrounded by two thousand times ten million apes of terrifying speed. Then came the heroic troop leader named Panasa, surrounded by three times ten million terrible monkeys resembling great mountains. And the huge troop leader named Nīla arrived, looking like a dark mound of collyrium and surrounded by ten times ten million. And then the powerful troop leader Darīmukha, surrounded by a thousand times ten million, came and approached Sugrīva. Then Mainda and Dvivida, the two mighty sons of the Aśvins, appeared with a thousand times ten million times ten million monkeys.

[24–28] Then came Gandhamādana with a hundred and a thousand times a thousand times ten million tawny monkeys following behind him. Next came the crown prince Aṅgada, whose prowess equaled his father's, surrounded by a thousand times one trillion and one hundred times ten trillion. Then the tawny monkey Tāra, brilliant as a star, terrifying in his prowess, appeared in the distance with five times ten million tawny monkeys. The heroic troop leader, the monkey Indrajānu, lord of eleven times ten million, appeared along with them. And then came Rambha, bright as the newly risen sun, surrounded by a hundred and a thousand and ten thousand.

[29–33] Then the mighty and heroic monkey lord of troops named Durmukha appeared, encircled by two times ten million. Surrounded by a thousand times ten million monkeys of terrifying valor and tall as the peaks of Kailāsa, Hanumān appeared. Heroic Nala came too, surrounded by one hundred and a thousand and one hundred times ten million tree-dwellers. And Śarabha, Kumuda, Vahni, and also the monkey Rambha—these and many other leaping monkeys who could change form at will, monkeys leaping and jumping and roaring, advanced toward Sugrīva, covering the whole earth and the mountains and woods, like a host of clouds advancing toward the sun.

[34–37] Full of strength, making a great noise in their delight, they bowed their heads and reported to Sugrīva, lord of monkeys. And other excellent monkeys, assembling as was proper, approached Sugrīva and stood with their palms cupped in reverence. Standing with his own palms cupped reverently, righteous Sugrīva immediately presented all those bulls

among monkeys to Rāma, and then he said: “Monkey princes! Each troop leader, when he has duly encamped his troops comfortably near the swift mountain streams and in all the forests, should be prepared to review his troops.”

Sarga 39

[1–8] Now the lord of leaping monkeys, King Sugrīva, his purpose accomplished, spoke to Rāma, that tiger among men and tormentor of enemy armies: “The mighty monkey lords who dwell in my domain, splendid as great Indra and able to change form at will, have come and are now encamped. These terrifying monkeys resembling *daityas* and *dānavas* have come with many thousands of tawny monkeys of fearful valor. Celebrated for their deeds and feats, strong, indefatigable, celebrated for their prowess and foremost in resolve, traveling by land and on water, dwelling on various mountains, these monkeys who have arrived by the tens of millions are at your service, Rāma. All obey orders, all are devoted to the welfare of their king. They will be able to accomplish your desire, subduer of your foes. You have only to say what you think is appropriate to the moment, tiger among men. This army is under your control. Please command it. It is true that I know exactly what they are to do, but even so you should command, as is proper.”

[9–14] Then Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, embraced Sugrīva, who was speaking in this fashion, and said these words: “Wise and dear friend, you must find the place where Rāvaṇa dwells and learn whether or not Vaidehī is alive. When I find Vaidehī and the hiding place of Rāvaṇa, I shall at that time arrange with you what is appropriate. Neither Lakṣmaṇa nor I is master in this undertaking, lord of monkeys. You are both master and the means of success for this undertaking, king of leaping monkeys. Knowing my decision about what is to be done, you alone must command. For without doubt you understand what has to be done for me, mighty hero. You are my friend and companion, valiant, intelligent, discriminating about time, intent on our welfare, wise about achieving objectives, with your own objective fully achieved.”

[15–18] Thus addressed, Sugrīva spoke in the presence of Rāma and wise Lakṣmaṇa to a powerful troop leader and lord of leaping monkeys named Vinata, who was as big as a mountain and who roared like a

thundercloud: “Along with the monkeys who are sons of the moon and the sun, you possess the worldly wisdom about time and place necessary for deciding what to do and what not to do, best of monkeys. Accompanied by a hundred thousand swift monkeys, go to the eastern quarter with its mountains, woods, and forests. There you must search for Videha’s daughter Sītā and for Rāvaṇa’s hiding place in the inaccessible mountain regions, in the forests, and along the rivers.

[19–23ab] “The charming rivers Bhāgīrathī, Sarayū, Kauśikī, and the charming Kālindī and Yamunā Rivers, and the great mountain Yāmuna, and the rivers Sarasvatī and Sindhu, and the Śoṇa with jewel-bright waters, and the Mahī and the Kālamahī Rivers adorned with mountains and woods; the regions of Brahmamāla, Videha, Mālava, Kāśi, and Kosala and the large villages of Magadha, and Puṇḍra as well as Vaṅga, the city of silkworms and the land of silver mines—all of this you must search, hunting here, there, and everywhere for Rāma’s beloved wife, Sītā, the daughter-in-law of Daśaratha.

[23cd–27] “Those who shelter on the broad summit of Mount Mandara and in cities and on mountains immersed in the ocean, both the Karṇaprāvaraṇas and the Oṣṭhakarṇakas, and the terrible Lohamukhas, and the swift one-legged men, and the strong, imperishable, man-eating men, and the handsome, golden-limbed Kirātas with ear ornaments, and the terrible Kirātas known as tiger-men who live on islands, eating raw fish and moving through the water—you must search all their dwelling places, monkeys!

[28–32] “And you must go to those islands that can be reached from mountains, by swimming or by boat: to Yavadvīpa rich in jewels, splendid with its seven kingdoms, and to Suvarṇarūpyaka ornamented with gold mines. Beyond Yavadvīpa, there is a mountain named Śiśira. Touching the sky with its peaks, it is frequented by gods and *dānavas*. In the inaccessible places of the mountains, by the waterfalls and in the forests of these islands, you must search for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī here, there, and everywhere. And then you must explore the dreadful islands in the sea. There huge *asuras* constantly seize shadows; they are permitted to do so by Brahmā because they went hungry for a long time.

[33–37] “By some means you must approach that sea, black as a storm cloud, loudly roaring, infested with great serpents; and then from there you

must go to the dreadful ocean called Lohita because of its red waters. There you will see the giant *kūṭaśālmalī* tree, and a house built by Viśvakarman for Vainateya, bright as Mount Kailāsa and adorned with every kind of jewel. There the dreadful, dangerous *rākṣasas* called Mandehas, big as mountains and with various forms, hang from the mountain peaks. Every day, toward sunrise, they fall into the water, only to hang scorching in the sun again and again.

[38–41] "Then, moving on, unassailable monkeys, you will see the ocean of milk, white as a cloud and with waves like necklaces of pearls. In its midst are a great white mountain named Ṛṣabha, surrounded by divinely fragrant silver trees in bloom, and a lake named Sudarśana, crowded with *rājahaṃsas* and shining silver lotuses with gold filaments. With great delight, the gods, celestial singers, *yakṣas*, and *kinnaras*, eager for sexual pleasure, approach that lotus bed with the hosts of *apsarases*.

[42–44] "Passing beyond the ocean of milk, monkeys, you will then see that excellent freshwater ocean, a source of dread to all beings. For in it is placed that great horse-faced fire born of anger, whose food they say is the rushing water with all its animals and plants. And there you can hear the sound of the helpless creatures who live in that ocean, crying out because they have seen that mare's face.

[45–48] "Thirteen leagues from the northern part of the freshwater ocean is a great golden mountain named Jātarūpaśila. On top of the mountain you will see sitting the thousand-headed god Ananta, clothed in blue and worshiped by all beings. And planted on top of the mountain is that great being's shining emblem, a triple-crowned golden palmyra tree resting on a sacred mound. The thirty gods have made this the limit of the eastern quarter. Beyond it is the majestic sunrise mountain made of gold.

[49–52] "Touching the heavens, its heavenly golden summit covered with sacred mounds shines, stretching one hundred leagues high. It looks splendid with its heavenly, blossoming *sāla*, *tāla*, *tamāla*, and *karṇikāra* trees made of gold and bright as the sun. On it is the eternal peak named Saumanasa, one league wide, ten leagues high, made of gold. When he took his three strides long ago, Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being, placed his first step there and his second on Mount Meru's crest.

[53–58] "The sun becomes most clearly visible when it travels around to the north of Jambūdvīpa and reaches that very lofty peak. And there one

sees those great seers, the ascetics called *vaikhānasas* and *vālakhilyas*, gleaming with the color of the sun. Here is the island Sudarśana, on which shines that light in whose presence alone the eyes of all living beings are able to see. In the bowers, caves, and forests of this mountain, you must hunt for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī here, there, and everywhere. Suffused with the light of the golden mountain and of the great sun, the eastern twilight glows red. Beyond this, one cannot proceed toward the eastern quarter, for it is invisible, devoid of moon and sun, shrouded in darkness, and guarded by the thirty gods.

[59–63] "You must search for Jānakī in every mountain, cave, and forest and even in those places I have not mentioned. But only this far, bulls among monkeys, can monkeys go. For we know not what lies beyond, boundless and untouched by sun. You must reach the sunrise mountain, find Vaidehī and the hiding place of Rāvaṇa, and return within a month. But you must not stay beyond a month, for I shall kill anyone who does. You are to find Maithilī and return with your mission accomplished. Go carefully over great Indra's beloved quarter, graced with forests; and when you have found Sītā, dear to him who was born in Raghu's line, and returned, you shall live in comfort, monkeys."

Sarga 40

[1–6] Then, when he had dispatched that great monkey army, Sugrīva sent off distinguished monkeys to the south. The heroic and judicious lord of the monkey hosts gave orders to swift, valiant heroes headed by Añgada—to Nīla, son of Agni, and to the monkey Hanumān; and to Grandfather Brahmā's son, the great monkey Jāmbavān; and to Suhotra and Śarāri and also Śaragulma; and to Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Suṣeṇa, and Ṛṣabha; to Mainda and Dvivida, Vijaya and Gandhamādana; and to Ulkāmukha and Asañga, both sons of Agni, the eater of oblations. And commanding a great army to go without delay ahead of those heroic tawny monkeys, he directed them toward the southern quarter.

[7–10] That lord of monkeys mentioned to those chief monkeys all the inaccessible places in that region, saying: "The thousand-peaked Vindhyas covered with all sorts of trees and vines, and the inaccessible river Narmadā infested with huge serpents; then the charming Godāvarī, the great river Kṛṣṇaveṇī, and the blessed Varadā infested with huge serpents; and the

Mekhala and Utkala regions as well as the cities of Daśārṇa, and Avantī and Abhravantī—search them all.

[11–16] "After exploring Vidarbha, Ṛṣika, and charming Māhiṣaka, Bañga, Kaliñga, and Kauśika all around, as well as the Daṇḍaka forest with its mountains, rivers, and caves, you must search the river Godāvarī and Andhra, Puṇḍra, Cola, Pāṇḍya, and Kerala—all of them. And you must go as well to Mount Ayomukha, embellished with ore. You must search that majestic great mountain with its many-colored peaks, its brightly flowering woods, and forest tracts of sandalwood. There you will see that heavenly, auspicious river Kāverī with its clear waters in which groups of *apsarases* play. And you will see the best of seers, mighty Agastya, bright as the sun, seated on the summit of Mount Malaya.

[17–19] "When that great seer graciously gives you permission to leave, you will cross the broad river Tāmraparṇī, the haunt of crocodiles. Graced with islands and hidden by heavenly sandalwood forests, it plunges into the ocean as a beloved young woman would rush to her beloved. Proceeding from there, monkeys, you will see the heavenly gateway made of gold and ornamented with pearls and jewels, befitting the Pāṇḍyas.

[20–23] "Then, when you come to the sea and consider what best to do, you will find on the shore majestic Mount Mahendra, the best of mountains, set there in that place by Agastya himself. Made of gold and with all sorts of bright trees, it plunges deep into the great ocean. Every time the moon enters a new phase, thousand-eyed Indra comes to this captivating mountain, adorned with all kinds of blossoming trees and vines, frequented by excellent gods, seers, and *yakṣas* and by *apsarases*, and thronged with multitudes of perfected beings and celestial bards.

[24–26] "On the far side of that ocean, there is a shining island that no man can reach. It is a hundred leagues wide, yet you must explore it all. It is there in particular that you should search for Sītā with all your heart. For this country is the abode of evil Rāvaṇa, overlord of the *rākṣasas*, whose splendor equals thousand-eyed Indra's, and who must be killed. But in the middle of the southern ocean there is a *rākṣasa* woman known as Añgārakā who feeds by catching shadows.

[27–30] "Beyond, in an ocean a hundred leagues across, is a splendid mountain named Puṣpitaka, frequented by perfected beings and celestial bards. Bright as the rays of the moon or the sun, surrounded by the waters

of the sea, it shines and seems to scrape the sky with its huge peaks. It has one peak of gold, frequented by the sun, maker of day, and one of bright silver, frequented by the moon, maker of night. The ungrateful, the wicked, and the unbelieving cannot see it. You must bow your heads to that mountain, monkeys, and then search it thoroughly.

[31–33] “Fourteen leagues beyond it by an impenetrable path is a mountain named Sūryavān, unassailable monkeys. Then beyond even that there is a mountain named Vaidyuta, its trees captivating in every season, their fruits satisfying every desire. When you have eaten the precious roots and fruits and tasted the excellent honey there, monkeys, you must proceed.

[34–37] “There is the mountain named Kuñjara, pleasing to the eye and to the mind, where Viśvakarman built a palace for Agastya. There, a league wide and ten leagues high, is his heavenly golden residence, ornamented with every kind of jewel. And there, well protected on all sides, is the city of Bhogavatī, the unassailable abode of the serpents. Its wide streets are guarded by fearsome serpents, sharp fanged and highly venomous. Vāsuki, the terrible king of the serpents, lives there. You must go and search that city of Bhogavatī.

[38–43] “And beyond that place is the great, majestic mountain named Ṛṣabha, shaped like a bull. It is full of every kind of jewel and on it grows heavenly *gośīrṣa*, *padma*, and *hariśyāma* sandalwood, bright as fire. But though you see that sandalwood, you must under no circumstances touch it; for fearsome *gandharvas* called the Rohitas guard that forest. In it dwell five *gandharva* lords, bright as the sun: Śailūṣa, Grāmaṇī, Bhikṣu, Śubhra, and Babhru. There at the end of the earth live the unassailable people who have won heaven. Beyond that is the dreadful world of deceased ancestors, which you must not visit. For that is Yama’s royal capital, enveloped by awful darkness. That is as far as you can search or proceed, heroic bulls among monkeys: beyond it, there is no path for the living.

[44–47] “Explore all this and whatever else you may see, and when you have learned Vaidehī’s location you must return. Whoever returns before the month’s end and says, ‘I have seen Sītā!’ will become as wealthy as I am and amuse himself happily with pleasures. No one will be dearer to me than he. I will love him more than life itself. Even if he has committed many offenses, he will become my friend. You have boundless strength and

prowess and were born in families of great virtue. Now you must begin this virtuous undertaking so that you may recover the daughter of the king."

Sarga 41

[1–7] When the glorious king had dispatched to the southern quarter those wise and valiant tawny monkeys, who equaled the wind in speed, he summoned his father-in-law, Tārā's father, Suṣeṇa by name, a troop leader of terrifying valor. Approaching him, he bowed, his palms cupped in reverence, and said: "Please assist Rāma in the undertaking that is at hand. Accompanied by one hundred thousand swift monkeys, please go to Varuṇa's western quarter, gentle lord. [c]You leaders of the troops of tawny monkey must search Surāṣṭra, Bāhlīka, Śūdra, and Abhīra, with their lovely and thriving countryside and large towns. You must also search the region Kukṣi with its thick forests of *puṃnāga* trees, a region filled with *bakula* and *uddālaka* trees. And also, search the *ketaka* thickets, and the auspicious westward-flowing rivers with their cool waters, the forests of ascetics, and whatever woods and mountains there may be.

[8–11] "Once you have searched the inaccessible western quarter, covered by a network of mountains, you will reach the imperturbable western ocean, monkeys, and see its waters full of whales and crocodiles. Then your monkeys will amuse themselves in *ketaka* thickets, in *tamāla* forests, and in coconut groves. You must search for Sītā and for Rāvaṇa's hiding place there and in the city of Marīci, and in charming Jaṭīpura; in Avantī, Aṅgalopā, and in the Alakṣita forest, and throughout those vast kingdoms and cities.

[12–15] "There, where the Sindhu River meets the ocean, stands a great mountain named Hemagiri, with a hundred peaks and gigantic trees. On its charming slopes live the giant *siṃha* birds, who carry up to their nests whales, fish, and elephants. Trumpeting with the sound of storm clouds, the proud and satisfied elephants who live on the mountain peak graze all about near these *siṃha* birds' nests in this broad and well-watered place. You monkeys, who change form at will, must quickly explore the whole of its golden peak that is covered with bright trees and touches the sky.

[16–20] "When you get there, monkeys, you will see in that ocean Mount Pāriyātra's golden summit one hundred leagues high and rarely seen. Twenty-four times ten million swift and terrible *gandharvas* dwell there,

bright as fire, changing their forms at will. They must not be approached too closely by you monkeys of fearsome valor, nor are you leaping monkeys to take any fruit whatever from that place. For those unassailable heroes of terrifying valor are courageous and very strong, and they guard the fruits and roots there. You must exert yourselves and hunt for Jānakī there, for they will not present any danger at all if you just behave like ordinary monkeys.

[21–23] "In one quarter of the ocean stands a mountain named Cakravān, where Viśvakarman fashioned a discus with a thousand spokes. There Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being, killed Pañcajana and the *dānava* Hayagrīva and took that discus and a conch. On the mountain's bright-colored slopes and in its large caves, you must search for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī here, there, and everywhere.

[24–29] "In Varuṇa's bottomless abode, the sea, stands a most majestic golden-peaked mountain named Varāha, sixty-four leagues high. On it is a city of pure gold named Prāgjyotiṣa, in which lives an evil-minded *dānava* named Naraka. On the mountain's bright-colored slopes and in its large caves, you must search for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī, here, there, and everywhere. Beyond that king of mountains, there is a mountain with ten thousand streams and waterfalls. It is entirely of gold, and its caves are golden within. All over it elephants, boars, lions, and tigers roar incessantly, maddened by their own cries. On it the gods consecrated as their king the majestic chastiser of Pāka, Indra of the bay steeds. The mountain's name is Meghavān.

[30–36] "Passing beyond that king of mountains protected by great Indra, you will come upon sixty thousand golden mountains the color of the newly risen sun, gleaming on every side, resplendent with beautifully flowering trees made of pure gold. In their midst stands Mount Meru, the king and greatest of mountains, to whom Āditya, the sun god, who had been propitiated, long ago granted a boon. And he spoke thus to the king of mountains: 'All who seek refuge on you by day or by night will by my grace become golden. Moreover, those gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* who live on you will be colored by your radiance and thus take on the radiance of gold.' The Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, Maruts, and denizens of heaven come to Mount Meru, greatest of mountains, at the time of the evening twilight

and worship Āditya, the sun god. Reverenced by them, the sun goes to the western mountain and becomes invisible to all beings.

[37–39] “Traversing ten thousand leagues in half an hour, the sun, maker of day, quickly reaches the western mountain. On its peak is a large and heavenly dwelling as bright as the sun, crowded with many palaces and resplendent with wonderful trees filled with birds of every kind. It was built by Viśvakarman and is the abode of great Varuṇa, who holds a noose in his hand.

[40–43] “Between Meru and the western mountain shines a great and majestic palmyra tree made of gold, with ten crowns and a splendid sacred mound. Among all the inaccessible lakes and rivers, you must search for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī here, there, and everywhere. In the place where the great and righteous seer Merusāvarṇi lives, sanctified by his own asceticism, the equal of Brahmā, radiant as the sun, you must bow your heads to the ground and ask him for news about Maithilī.

[44–47] “Only this much of the world of the living does the sun, bringer of light, illuminate when night is over, before moving again to the western mountain. And only so far, bulls among monkeys, can monkeys go. For we know not what lies beyond, boundless and untouched by the sun. You must reach the western mountain, find Vaidehī and the hiding place of Rāvaṇa, and return within a month. But you must not stay beyond a month, for I shall kill anyone who does. My heroic father-in-law will go with you.

[48–52] “This is my revered elder, my great-armed, mighty father-in-law. You who follow my commands must listen to everything he says. Although you too are valiant and are authorities concerning every action, you must make him your authority and so explore the western quarter. Once you have found the wife of the immeasurably powerful king, we will have accomplished our purpose by repaying what was done for us. Also keep in mind anything else that might be helpful to this enterprise, and then do it in accordance with the place, time, and goal.” Then, when the leaping monkeys had heard Sugrīva’s skillful speech, they all took leave of the lord of monkeys and, headed by Suṣeṇa, set out toward the quarter guarded by Varuṇa.

Sarga 42

[1–8] Then, when King Sugrīva, bull among monkeys, skilled in counsel, had directed his father-in-law to the western quarter, he addressed the heroic monkey named Śatabali, who was respected by all the monkeys, in words that were to his own benefit as well as Rāma's: "Surrounded by a hundred thousand forest-dwelling monkeys like yourself, you are to depart with your counselors, the sons of Yama Vaivasvata. You are to search for Rāma's blameless wife everywhere in the mighty northern quarter whose crest ornament is the Himalayas. You are foremost among those who know their goals and achieve them. Once this task has been completed, once this favor has been done for Daśaratha's son, we shall be free of our obligation. For great Rāghava did us a favor. If the favor is returned, our own life will have been fruitful. You who desire what is pleasing and beneficial to us must accept this view and act in such a way that Jānakī is found. For Rāma, the best of men and a conqueror of enemy cities, is worthy of every being's respect and has entered into friendship with us.

[9–13] "Using your abundance of intelligence and valor, you must thoroughly search the inaccessible forests, rivers, and even inside the mountain caverns. When you have searched repeatedly through the countries of the Mlecchas, the Pulindas, and the Śūrasenas; the Prasthalas, the Bharatas, the Kurus, and the Madrakas; the Kāmbojas, the Yavanas, the Śakas, the Āraṭṭakas, the Bāhlīkas, the Ṛṣikas, the Pauravas, and the Ṭaṅkaṇas; the Cīnas, the Paramacīnas, the Nīhāras, and the Daradas; you must scour the Himalayas. In thickets of *lodhra* and *padmaka* and through the forests of *devadāru* pine, you must search for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī here, there, and everywhere.

[14–17] "When you come to the ashram of Soma, frequented by gods and *gandharvas*, you will have reached the mountain named Kāla, with its mighty peaks. On its great peaks, in its caverns and caves, you must hunt for Rāma's renowned, illustrious wife. Passing beyond that great mountain, you should then go to the mountain called Sudarśana, a king of mountains filled with gold. In its forest thickets, its caverns and caves, you must search for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī here, there, and everywhere.

[18–23] "Beyond it lies an open space, a hundred leagues on every side, without mountains, rivers, or trees, devoid of any living thing. But if you quickly cross that horrifying wasteland, you will be delighted once you reach the white mountain Kailāsa. There, bright as a white cloud and

embellished with gold, stands Kubera's heavenly dwelling, built by Viśvakarman. Near it is a vast lotus pond filled with red and blue lotuses, crowded with *haṃsas* and *kāraṇḍavas*, and frequented by hosts of *apsarases*. And there the majestic giver of wealth, King Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, king of the *yakṣas*, honored by all beings, enjoys himself along with the *guhyakas*. On Kailāsa's foothills bright as the moon, and in its caves, you must search for Rāvaṇa and Vaidehī here, there, and everywhere.

[24–28] "When you reach the Krauñca mountain, you must cautiously enter its inaccessible opening, for it is said to be very difficult to enter. In it live great seers radiant as the sun; they look like gods and are worshiped by the gods themselves. After exploring Krauñca's peak and the abode of birds, the wish-fulfilling mountain Mānasa, devoid of trees, you must search Krauñca's other caves, ridges, peaks, caverns, and slopes, here, there, and everywhere. Great beings such as gods, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas* do not go there; still, all of you are to search it, including its ridges, tablelands, and foothills.

[29–30] "Beyond Mount Krauñca lies a mountain called Maināka, where stands the *dānava* Maya's palace, which he fashioned himself. You must search Maināka, including its ridges, tablelands, and caves, where stand the scattered dwellings of the horse-faced women.

[31–34] "Beyond that region stands an ashram frequented by perfected beings. In it are perfected beings, *vaikhānasa* hermits, and *vālakhilya* ascetics. You must reverentially greet those ascetics, who are free of sin and perfected by austerities, and politely ask them for news of Sītā. The hermits' lake is there, covered with golden lotuses and visited by lovely *haṃsas* radiant as the newly risen sun. Kubera's royal mount, the bull elephant Sārvabhauma, always roams about that region with his cows.

[35–38] "Beyond that lake the sky is devoid of moon and sun, maker of day, with no hosts of stars, no clouds, and no beginning. And yet that region seems radiant with sunbeams, so self-luminous are the godlike beings perfected by austerities who repose there. And beyond that region is a river named Śailoda, on both of whose banks grow the bamboo canes known as *kīcaka*. These carry the perfected beings to and from the opposite shore, where lies the country of Uttarakuru, the refuge of those who have performed meritorious deeds.

[39–43] “There are rivers by the thousands there, their waters brimming with beds of golden lotuses, rich with leaves sapphire and emerald. The ponds there sparkle for they are adorned with clusters of red lotuses made of gold, bright as the newly risen sun. The whole region is covered with bright clusters of blue lotuses, with leaves like precious jewels, and filaments shining like gold. There splendid, glittering mountains, golden and bright as fire, full of all kinds of jewels, plunge down to rivers in which shoals of round pearls, precious gems, and gold have arisen.

[44–48] “And there trees crowded with birds, always laden with fruits and flowers, whose fragrance, taste, and touch are heavenly, yield every desire. Other magnificent trees bring forth garments of every appearance, as well as ornaments glittering with pearls and emeralds, for both women and men. Still others bear fruits to enjoy in every season. Others yield wonderful precious golden beds with bright-colored coverings; while other trees produce garlands that delight the heart, and all sorts of costly drinks and foods.

[49–52] “There are splendid women there distinguished by their beauty and youth. There *gandharvas*, *kinnaras*, perfected beings, great serpents, and *vidyādharas*, all shining like the sun, bringer of light, make love with these women. All have performed virtuous deeds, all are intent on sexual delight, all live with young women, enjoying pleasures and wealth. Sounds of singing and musical instruments and loud laughter are constantly heard there, delighting the hearts of all beings. No one is unhappy there, no one lacks a beloved. There virtues that delight the heart increase day by day.

[53–56] “Beyond that country lies the northern ocean. There, in its midst, stands the great golden mountain named Somagiri. Those gods who have gone to the world of Indra and those who have gone to the Brahmaloka behold that king of mountains, for it reaches up to heaven. It is the radiance of the mountain that makes this sunless region seem to blaze with sunlight: you can recognize it by a splendor like that of the blazing sun god Vivasvant. And there dwells the blessed one, the soul of the universe, the benevolent elevenfold lord of the gods Brahmā, surrounded by brahman-seers.

[57–62] “By no means are you to go north of the Kurus. Even for other beings, no path lies beyond. For this mountain called Somagiri cannot be reached even by the gods. Once you have seen it, you must turn back at

once. Only this far, bulls among monkeys, can monkeys go. For we know not what lies beyond, boundless and untouched by sun. You are to search every place that I have mentioned. But you must also resolve to search any others that I failed to mention. Then, by acting to find Videha's daughter, you who are equal to wind or fire will have done a great favor for Daśaratha's son and an even greater favor for me. And so when you have accomplished your mission, leaping monkeys, I will honor you and your kinsmen with pleasing objects full of every virtue. With your enemies subdued, able to support other beings, you shall roam the earth with your beloveds."

Sarga 43

[1–6] And now Sugrīva stated his purpose to Hanumān in particular, for he was confident that he, the foremost of the tawny monkeys, would achieve it, saying: "Neither on earth, nor in the air, nor in the sky, nor in the region of the gods, nor in the waters do I foresee any obstacle to your passage, bull among tawny monkeys. For you know all worlds, together with their oceans and mountains, their *asuras*, *gandharvas*, great serpents, men, and gods. Great and heroic monkey, your motion, speed, power, and quickness are equal to those of your father, the mighty wind god Māruta. Nor is there any other being on earth to equal you in strength. Therefore, if Sītā is to be recovered, you yourself must bring this about. In you alone, Hanumān, are strength, intelligence, prowess, regard for time and place, and statesmanship, wisest of statesmen."

[7–10] Understanding from this that the undertaking had been entrusted to Hanumān, and knowing Hanumān himself, Rāghava thought: "The lord of the tawny monkeys has complete confidence in Hanumān, and Hanumān appears even more confident about accomplishing this undertaking. Known by his deeds and chosen by his master, even as he sets out his success in this undertaking is therefore assured." And as mighty Rāma beheld that supremely resolute tawny monkey, his senses and heart filled with joy like someone whose object was already achieved.

[11–14] And so Rāma, scorcher of his foes, was delighted and gave him a ring engraved with his name as a token of recognition for the princess, saying: "Janaka's daughter will see by this sign that you have come from me and she will not be afraid, best of tawny monkeys. Your determination

and your valor combined with strength, together with Sugrīva's command, hero, seem to me to foretell success." Taking the ring, that best of tawny monkeys touched it to his head, his palms cupped in reverence; then bowing at Rāma's feet, he departed, that finest of leaping monkeys.

[15–16] As that heroic monkey, son of Pavana, the wind god, led away his great army of tawny monkeys, he looked like the unblemished circle of the hare-marked moon adorned by hosts of stars in a cloudless sky. Then Rāma said: "Mighty Hanumān, valiant as a lion, I rely on your might, son of Pavana. You must perform feats of great valor so that Janaka's daughter is regained!"

Sarga 44

[1–2] Those bulls among tawny monkeys understood their master's stern command and set off, covering the earth like locusts. But Rāma remained on Mount Prasravaṇa with Lakṣmaṇa, waiting out the month that had been allotted to recovering Sītā.

[3–8] Then the heroic tawny monkey Śatabali set off at once for the lovely northern quarter guarded by the king of mountains. Vinata, leader of the troops of tawny monkeys, proceeded to the eastern quarter. The leaping monkey, Pavana's son and leader of the troops of tawny monkeys, went with Tāra, Añgada, and others to the southern quarter, where Agastya journeyed. The lord of leaping monkeys, Suṣeṇa, tiger among tawny monkeys, set out for the terrible western quarter, which Varuṇa staunchly defends. Then, when King Sugrīva had duly dispatched his principal monkey generals to every quarter, delighted, he rejoiced happily. Dispatched in this way by the king, all the leaders of the monkey troops set off, each hastening toward his own assigned quarter.

[9–15] Those leaping monkeys marched forth, running and leaping. Those foremost of leaping monkeys, roaring, shouting, and bellowing, cried out: "We shall kill Rāvaṇa and recover Sītā!" And each one boasted: "When I find Rāvaṇa, I will kill him in battle all by myself." "When I have crushed him, I will immediately bring back Janaka's daughter, trembling in her exhaustion." "I will bring back Jānakī all by myself even if it is from the underworld known as Pātāla. The rest of you can wait here!" "I will scatter trees!" "I will split mountains!" "I will split the earth!" "I will roil the oceans!" "I will leap a distance of one hundred leagues, without any

doubt!" "And I will leap more than one hundred leagues!" "On the earth's surface, in the ocean, on mountains or in forests, or even in the depths of Pātāla, nothing can stop me!" Such were the declarations made by those monkeys, proud of their strength, as each spoke in turn in the presence of the king of the tawny monkeys.

Sarga 45

[1–4] When the monkey leaders had gone, Rāma spoke to Sugrīva, "How do you happen to know the whole compass of the earth so well?" Then self-possessed Sugrīva bowed and said to Rāma: "Listen, bull among men, and I shall tell you the whole story in detail. When Vālin chased Dundubhi—a *dānava* in the form of a buffalo—toward Mount Malaya, the buffalo entered a cave in Malaya. Vālin too entered the mountain at that spot, with the intention of killing him.

[5–8] "Then I was installed obediently at the opening to the cave. But Vālin did not come out even after a year had passed. And then the hole was filled with a torrent of blood. Dismayed to see that, I suffered intense grief for my brother. I thought that my elder brother had surely been killed; so I placed a rock as big as a mountain over the opening of the hole, thinking that if the buffalo were unable to come out he would perish. Then, without hope for Vālin's life, I returned to Kiṣkindhā. The great kingdom became mine, and so did Tārā and Rumā. And there I lived with my friends, free of care.

[9–12] "Then Vālin came back after killing that bull among *dānavas*. So I restored the kingdom to him, driven by fear because he was my elder. But wicked Vālin had taken leave of his senses. He wanted to kill me, and in his rage he pursued me as I fled with my ministers. As Vālin chased me and my companions, I saw all sorts of rivers, forests, and cities. Thus, it was that I saw the earth—like the surface of a mirror or like the circling of a torch—as if it were merely a cow's hoofprint.

[13–17] "After I had gone east, I took refuge in the south. Then I went on to the west because I was fearful of the danger. But then when I came to the north, Hanumān said to me: 'I now remember, king, how the lord of the tawny monkeys, Vālin, was earlier cursed by Matañga, who said, "If Vālin should enter the confines of this ashram, his head will break into a hundred pieces." Staying there will be pleasant and free of worry for us.' Therefore,

prince, when Vālin reached Mount Ṛśyamūka, he did not enter the ashram on account of fear of Matañga. So it was, king, that at that time I beheld with my own eyes the entire compass of the earth, before I came to the cave."

Sarga 46

[1–5] At the command of the monkey king, the leaders of the monkey troops swiftly departed in every direction, as they had been instructed, in order to find Vaidehī. They thoroughly searched lakes, rivers, underbrush, open ground, cities, mountains, and inaccessible places near rivers. All the leaders of the monkey troops scoured the regions Sugrīva had mentioned, including their mountains, forests, and woods. Intent on finding Sītā, all the monkeys searched by day and at night gathered in one place. And every day in those countries, they made their beds for the night in trees bearing fruit in all seasons.

[6–9] But when a month had passed since that first day, the leaders of the monkey troops gave up hope and returned to Mount Prasravaṇa where they met with the monkey king. Mighty Vinata and his companions searched the east as instructed but returned without finding Sītā. Then came the great monkey hero Śatabali with his army, after searching all of the north. After searching the west, Suṣeṇa and his monkeys reassembled and came to Sugrīva when the month had passed.

[10–14] They approached Sugrīva, who was seated with Rāma on top of Mount Prasravaṇa, and, saluting respectfully, they said: "We have searched all the lands; all the mountains, forests, cities, and rivers flowing to the seas. And we have searched all the caves you mentioned, and all the vast thickets densely overspread with creepers. In impenetrable, inaccessible, and impassable places, we have stalked and killed immense beasts. And we have searched those impenetrable places repeatedly. It is great Hanumān, that lord of monkeys of exalted strength and illustrious lineage, who will find Maithilī; for the son of the wind god has gone in the direction that Sītā went."

Sarga 47

[1–5] Indeed, the monkey Hanumān had set out with Tāra and Añgada and was advancing toward the region indicated by Sugrīva. He journeyed far with all those great monkeys and explored the caves and impenetrable

forests of the Vindhya mountains. Though all those heroic monkeys searched everywhere in that quarter—inaccessible places near rivers, mountaintops, lakes, large trees, different groves of trees, and foothills thick with trees—none of them found the princess of Mithilā, Janaka's daughter Sītā. Eating various roots and fruits as they searched, the unassailable monkeys camped in different places; but that country was vast and was difficult to search with its caves and deep forests.

[6–9] Then all those dauntless leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys left that region and entered another region difficult to approach, where the trees lacked fruits, flowers, and leaves, where the rivers were without water, where roots were very hard to find, where there were no buffalo, deer, elephants, tigers, birds, or other forest creatures, and where beautiful, fragrant lotus beds, with glossy leaves and full-blown lotuses, were without bees.

[10–12] There was an illustrious great seer named Kaṇḍu, ascetic, truthful, highly irascible, and unassailable by virtue of his religious observances. His son, a ten-year-old boy, perished in that forest. The great sage was angered at his ending his life there. Cursed then by that righteous sage, the entire vast forest became inhospitable, unapproachable, and devoid of wild animals and birds.

[13–15] Nonetheless, the monkeys carefully searched its forest regions, its mountain caves, and the sources of its rivers. But even though the great monkeys were eager to please Sugrīva, they found neither Janaka's daughter nor her abductor, Rāvaṇa. However, as they entered a frightful place covered over by vines and thickets, they saw an *asura* of cruel deeds who feared not even the gods.

[16–19] When the monkeys saw him standing like some terrible mountain, when they saw him looking like a mountain, they all girded their loins tightly. Then the mighty *asura* said to all those monkeys, "You are lost!" and, raising his clenched fist, he charged them furiously. Thinking, "This must be Rāvaṇa," Vālin's son Añgada struck him with the palm of his hand as he rushed violently upon them. Struck by Vālin's son and vomiting blood from his mouth, the *asura* fell to the ground like a mountain overturned.

[20–22] When he had breathed his last, those monkeys, with an air of victory, searched nearly every cave there in that mountain. Then, when they

had all once more searched the forest, they entered another terrible mountain cave nearby. Exhausted after searching again, they came out and sat down all together in a lonely place at the foot of a tree, dejected at heart.

Sarga 48

[1–4] Now wise Aṅgada, though exhausted, encouraged all the monkeys and softly spoke these words to them: “Together we have searched here, there, and everywhere throughout the forests, mountains, rivers, the deep and inaccessible woods, as well as the mountain caves and caverns; and yet we have not seen anywhere Janaka’s daughter Sītā, who is like a daughter of the gods, nor have we seen the *rākṣasa* who carried her off. Most of our time has gone by, and Sugrīva is stern in his commands. Therefore, together you must search everywhere.

[5–10] “You must shake off the exhaustion, grief, and sleepiness that has arisen and search so that we may find Janaka’s daughter Sītā. They say that cheerfulness, perseverance, and mental fortitude produce success in an undertaking. That is why I am telling you this. This very day, forest dwellers, you must search this inaccessible forest. You must banish dejection and search this entire forest again. If one takes action, one inevitably sees its results. So enough of this yielding to despair! It is not right for us to close our eyes. Then, too, Sugrīva is a wrathful king and inflicts harsh punishment, monkeys. He is always to be feared, as is great Rāma. If it pleases you, do what I have said, which is to your advantage. Otherwise you say what is right for all of us, monkeys.”

[11–14] When Gandhamādana heard these words of Aṅgada, he responded in a voice rendered weary and indistinct through thirst and exhaustion: “What Aṅgada says is surely appropriate, beneficial, and favorable to you. We should do as he says. We must explore these mountains, caves, caverns, desolate forests, and mountain waterfalls yet again. You must all search the forest and all the inaccessible parts of the mountain as specified by great Sugrīva.”

[15–19] So once more the mighty monkeys got up and roamed over the southern region, which was densely covered with the forests of the Vindhya range. Those foremost of tawny monkeys climbed a majestic silver mountain that had peaks and caverns and was bright as an autumnal cloud; and they searched a grove of *lodhra* trees and groves of *saptaparṇa* trees,

hoping to find Sītā. But when those very valiant monkeys reached the mountaintop exhausted, they still had not found Vaidehī, Rāma's beloved queen. And when those tawny monkeys had examined that mountain and its many caves, they descended, looking all about.

[20–22] By the time they had descended from there to level ground, they were nearly unconscious with exhaustion, so they stopped there for a while leaning against the roots of a tree. After a while they recovered, and when their exhaustion was somewhat dispelled, they were ready once more to search the entire southern region. Setting off with Hanumān at their head, those bulls among leaping monkeys began ranging over the Vindhyas on all sides all over again.

Sarga 49

[1–4] Now the monkey Hanumān along with Tāra and Aṅgada searched the caves and deep forests of the Vindhya ranges, and also the caverns inhabited by lions and tigers all around on precipices and by the great waterfalls of that king of mountains. While they stayed there, the appointed time passed by. For that vast region with its caves and deep forests was hard to search. There the wind god's son searched the whole mountain.

[5–10] Separated from one another, but not too far, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Mainda, Dvivida, Hanumān, Jāmbavān, Aṅgada the crown prince, and Tāra the forest dweller searched the lands of the south, which are overspread with mountain chains. At length, overcome by hunger and thirst, exhausted, and desperate for water, they saw an enormous cavern overgrown with vines and trees. Out of it flew *krauñcas*, *haṃsas*, *sārasa* cranes, and *cakravākas*, dripping with water, their bodies red with lotus pollen. Reaching that fragrant but impenetrable cavern, those bulls among monkeys were amazed and bewildered. Their expectations aroused, those splendid, mighty, excellent leaping monkeys approached that cavern with delight.

[11–14] Then Hanumān, son of the wind god Māruta, huge as a mountain peak, who was familiar with forests and jungles, addressed all the monkeys: "We are all exhausted from searching the lands of the south, which are overspread with mountain chains; yet we still have not found Maithilī. Moreover, *haṃsas*, *krauñca* birds, *sārasa* cranes, and *cakravāka* birds are flying out of this cavern on every side, dripping with water. Then,

too, lush trees stand at the entrance to the cavern. Surely there must be a well with water or else a pool in there."

[15–18] Addressed in this fashion, the tawny monkeys all entered the cavern, which was shrouded in darkness. Unlit by moon or sun, it looked terrifying to them. So, clinging to each other, they walked for a league inside that impenetrable cavern all crowded with various trees. Nearly unconscious, thirsty, bewildered, and desperate for water, they wandered tirelessly through that cavern for some time. At last, despairing of their lives, those heroic leaping monkeys, thin, sad faced, and exhausted, saw a light.

[19–24] Soon they reached a pleasant spot, a brightly illuminated forest; they saw golden trees bright as a blazing fire: *sālas* and *tālas*, *puṃnāgas*, *kakubhas*, *vañjulas*, *dhavas*, *campakas*, *nāgavṛkṣas*, and blossoming *karṇikāras*, radiant as the newly risen sun. Around them were sacrificial platforms made of emerald, and there were lotus beds the color of sapphires and emeralds, crowded with birds. There they saw great golden trees splendid as the rising sun surrounding lotus ponds with clear waters, filled with turtles and large fish made of pure gold. And they saw gold and silver palaces covered with fretworks of pearl, with round windows of pure gold, and with floors made of gold and silver set with emeralds.

[25–29] Everywhere the tawny monkeys saw fine mansions and blossoming, fruit-bearing trees looking like coral set with gems. And all about were golden bees and honey, and beds and seats glittering with gems and gold. And on all sides, they saw costly chariots and piles of vessels made of gold, silver, and brass, as well as heaps of aloewood and heavenly sandalwood. And they saw pure, edible roots, and fruits, and costly drinks, sweet and flavorful; and piles of heavenly, costly garments, and of bright-colored wool blankets and black antelope skins.

[30–32] Searching here and there in that cavern, the splendid, heroic monkeys saw a woman not far from them. They saw that she was a fasting ascetic clothed in bark garments and a black antelope skin, who seemed to blaze with power, and they were greatly frightened. Then Hanumān, huge as a mountain, greeted the old woman with his palms cupped in reverence and asked her, "Tell us, who are you? And this dwelling, this cavern, these jewels—to whom do they belong?"

Sarga 50

[1–8] When he had spoken in this fashion, Hanumān once more addressed that righteous, illustrious ascetic woman clothed in black antelope skin: “Exhausted by hunger and thirst, and thoroughly fatigued in every way, we rashly entered this cavern though it was shrouded in darkness. Since we were thirsty, we entered this great opening in the earth. But now that we have seen miraculous objects of such various kinds as these, we are frightened, bewildered, and stupefied. Whose are these golden trees, bright as the newly risen sun, and these pure, edible roots and fruits, and these palaces of gold and houses of silver, with round windows of pure gold, and covered with fretworks of precious stones? Whose power created these sacred, sweet-smelling trees of gold, blossoming and bearing fruit, and these golden lotuses in clear water? And how is it that golden fish swim here along with turtles? Please tell us everything—about yourself and your greatness and whose ascetic power this reveals—for we are all ignorant.”

[9–15] Addressed in this way by Hanumān, the righteous ascetic woman, who was devoted to the welfare of all beings, replied: “There was once a glorious bull among *dānavas* named Maya, who possessed creative powers. It was he who fashioned this entire golden forest by those very creative powers. He who fashioned this excellent, heavenly, golden dwelling was once the chief architect for the *dānava* leaders. After performing austerities in a great forest for thousands of years, he obtained all the wealth of Uśanas as a boon from Grandfather Brahmā. Mighty master of every object of his desire, he created all of this and then lived happily in this great forest for some time. But the lord Indra, smasher of citadels, took his thunderbolt and attacked and killed that bull among *dānavas*, who was attached to the *apsaras* Hemā. And Brahmā bestowed upon Hemā this wonderful forest, this golden mansion, and the everlasting enjoyment of every object of her desire.

[16–19] “Best of monkeys, I am Svayaṃprabhā, daughter of Merusāvarṇi. I watch over this dwelling of Hemā’s. My dear friend Hemā is skillful at dancing and singing. Granted a boon by her, I watch over this fine dwelling. But why and for what purpose have you come to such a wilderness? And how did you discover this inaccessible forest? After you have eaten these edible roots and fruits and drunk some water, you must tell me everything.”

Sarga 51

[1–2] Then, when all the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys had rested, the ascetic woman, devoted to righteousness, her thoughts focused, said these words to them: “Monkeys, if your fatigue has been dispelled by eating fruit, and if your story is proper for me to hear, I wish to hear it. Please tell it.”

[3–7] Hearing these words of hers, Hanumān, son of Māruta the wind god, began to tell his tale frankly and truthfully: “Majestic Rāma Dāśarathi, king of all the world, the equal of great Indra or Varuṇa, entered the Daṇḍaka forest with his brother Lakṣmaṇa and his wife, Vaidehī. His wife was forcibly abducted from Janasthāna by Rāvaṇa. It was a friend of that king, the heroic monkey named Sugrīva, king of the monkey chiefs, who dispatched us with these prominent monkeys headed by Aṅgada to the southern region, which, guarded by Yama, is traversed by Agastya.

[8–10] “We were all exhorted to hunt together for the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa, who changes form at will, and for Sītā Vaidehī. But when we all had searched the entire southern region, we rested at the foot of a tree, starving and completely exhausted. All our faces were pale and we were all lost in brooding thought. Sunk in an ocean of gloomy thought, we could not reach its far shore.

[11–14] “Then, casting our gaze about, we spied an enormous cavern concealed by vines and trees and shrouded in darkness. Out of it flew birds —*haṃsas*, ospreys, and *sārasa* cranes—dripping with water and with droplets of water on their wings. So, I said to the leaping monkeys, ‘Very well, let’s go in!’ All of them agreed. In their haste to accomplish their master’s purpose, they cried, ‘Let’s go! Let’s go in!’ Then, tightly grasping each other’s hands, we clambered down. And so we rashly entered this cavern shrouded in darkness.

[15–17] “This was our purpose. With this object we came. And then all of us, emaciated and starving, came upon you. In keeping with the laws of hospitality, you gave us, tormented by hunger, roots and fruits, which we have eaten. Since you saved us when we were all dying of hunger, you must now say what the monkeys can do to repay your kindness.”

[18–19] When the monkeys had addressed Svayaṃprabhā in this way, the all-knowing woman replied to all the leaders of the monkey troops: “I

am well pleased with all of you swift monkeys, but since I am engaged in religious practices, I have no need of anything."

Sarga 52

[1–5] When the ascetic woman of blameless actions had spoken those fine words consistent with righteousness, Hanumān made this reply: "We have all come to you for refuge, righteous woman. The time allotted to us by great Sugrīva elapsed while we have been wandering about in this cavern. Please deliver us from this dreadful cavern. Since we have transgressed Sugrīva's command, we are as good as dead. Please save us, for we are all overwhelmed with our terror of Sugrīva. We have a great task to accomplish, righteous woman, but we cannot accomplish that task if we stay here."

[6–10] Addressed in this way by Hanumān, the ascetic woman replied: "It is difficult, I believe, for anyone who has entered here to get out alive. However, by the power of asceticism that I have gained through my religious penances, I shall rescue all of you monkeys from this cavern. Close your eyes, all you bulls among monkeys, for those whose eyes are not shut cannot get out." Delighted and eager to escape, they all quickly closed their eyes and covered them with their delicate-fingered hands. And once they had covered their faces with their hands, she delivered the great monkeys from the cavern in the twinkling of an eye.

[11–14] Then the righteous ascetic woman reassured all those monkeys who had emerged from that difficult place and said this: "This is the majestic Vindhya mountain with all its different trees and vines. There is Mount Prasravaṇa. And the great body of water over here is the sea. Farewell, bulls among monkeys. I must return home." And with these words, Svayaṃprabhā reentered that magnificent cavern. And so the monkeys beheld the terrible ocean, abode of Varuṇa, boundless, wildly roaring, agitated by terrible waves.

[15–18] Now, while they had been searching Maya's mountain stronghold constructed through his creative powers, the month fixed by the king as a time limit had elapsed. So as the illustrious monkeys sat on a foothill of the Vindhya mountain amid trees in full flower, they fell prey to anxiety. Seeing the trees with their tops laden with spring blossoms and covered over by hundreds of creepers, they became frightened. Telling one

another that spring had come, they slumped to the ground because they had not achieved their object within the allotted time.

[19–22] Then Aṅgada, the crown prince, a wise monkey with long, full arms and shoulders like a lion's or a bull's, said these words: "We have all departed on account of the monkey king's instructions. Don't you realize, tawny monkeys, that a whole month went by while we were in the cavern? Since the time allotted by Sugrīva himself has passed, it would be proper for all of us forest-dwelling monkeys to fast to death. Sugrīva, who has been appointed as our master, is harsh by nature; because we have offended against him, he will not forgive any of us when we go back.

[23–27] "If we have no news of Sītā, he will do a great evil. Therefore, it would be fitting for us to abandon our sons, wives, wealth, and homes and fast to death this very day, rather than all be put to death by the king on our return. Better death right here than shameful execution. It was not Sugrīva who had me consecrated as crown prince; rather it was the lord of men, Rāma, untiring in action, who consecrated me. So when the king, who is already hostile to me, discovers my transgression, he will resolve upon a harsh punishment and have me killed. How would it be for my friends to witness such a calamity at my life's end? No, I shall sit right here fasting to death on the holy shore of the sea."

[28–30] Now, when all those great monkeys heard what the young crown prince said, they replied piteously: "Sugrīva is harsh by nature, and Rāghava is devoted to his beloved. When Sugrīva sees that we have come back without finding Vaidehī, he will undoubtedly have us killed out of a desire to please Rāghava. Besides, it is not proper for those who have offended their master to return to his side."

[31–33] When he heard the words of the fearful leaping monkeys, Tāra said: "Enough of this despondency! If you like, we can all go back into the cavern and live there. Constructed through creative powers, it is quite inaccessible and has plentiful water, food, drink, and trees. There we will be safe even from Indra, smasher of citadels, let alone from Rāghava or the king of monkeys." Pleased at hearing words agreeable also to Aṅgada, the tawny monkeys all said, "Let us at once and without delay devise some means whereby we will not be killed."

Sarga 53

[1–6] Now as Tāra, splendid as the lord of stars, was speaking in this way, Hanumān thought that Añgada had taken over the kingship. Hanumān believed that Vālin’s son possessed the eight kinds of intelligence, the four strengths, and that he possessed the fourteen qualities. He thought too that Añgada was constantly increasing in power, strength, and prowess, like the moon growing in majesty at the start of the bright fortnight. Moreover, Hanumān considered him like his father in valor, equal to Bṛhaspati in intelligence, and as attentive to Tāra as Indra, smasher of citadels, was to Śukra. So Hanumān began to try to win over Añgada, who, though skilled in every *śāstra*, was weary of his master’s purpose. Resorting to the third of the four expedients, he sowed dissension among all those monkeys by a wealth of arguments.

[7–12] Then, when they were all at odds with one another, he intimidated Añgada with many frightening arguments combining anger and expediency, saying: “Son of Tārā, you are more capable than your father. And like your father, you could take firm control of the vanguard in battle and of the kingdom of the monkeys. But monkeys are always fickle minded, bull among tawny monkeys. Without their sons and wives, they will not tolerate being ordered about by you. I shall speak out clearly to you. They will not enter your service. You will not be able to alienate Jāmbavān, Nīla, the great monkey Suhotra, me, and all these other monkeys from Sugrīva with such expedients as conciliation and gifts, nor by punishment. They say that when a stronger person has waged war against a weaker one, he can then sit quietly, but not the reverse. Therefore, to save himself, a weak person should not wage war.

[13–18] “And this cavern you have been hearing about, which you believe is your protection, would be easily split open by Lakṣmaṇa’s arrows. Very little damage was done long ago by Indra when he hurled his thunderbolt. But Lakṣmaṇa would tear it open with his sharp arrows as if it were a leaf-cup. And Lakṣmaṇa has many such iron arrows. No sooner would you take up your position, scorcher of your foes, than all the tawny monkeys will make up their minds to desert. Remembering their sons and wives, constantly anxious, hungry and distressed by the difficult conditions, they will turn their backs on you. Deprived of well-wishing friends and relations, you will be terrified even by a quivering blade of grass. Nor will

Lakṣmaṇa’s swift and terrible arrows, unbearable and deadly, fail to strike you once you swerve from your duty.

[19–21] “But if you go with us and approach Sugrīva humbly, he will establish you in the kingship through regular succession. Your paternal uncle wishes to do right and desires your affection. Firm in his vows, honest and true to his promise, he would never want to kill you. And he wishes to please your mother: that is the sole purpose of his life. Moreover, he has no other offspring. Therefore, Añgada, you should go back.”

Sarga 54

[1–4] Upon hearing Hanumān’s polite words, which were consistent with righteousness and full of reverence for his master, Añgada replied: “Steadfastness, absolute integrity, benevolence, uprightness, valor, and firmness are not to be found in Sugrīva. That disgusting person who appropriated his living elder brother’s beloved wife and queen, who is by rights his mother; the evil person who blocked the mouth of the cave when his brother had ordered him to fight—how would he know what is right?

[5–8] “To whom would he ever be grateful, when he gave his hand in a solemn vow of mutual assistance and then forgot all about illustrious Rāghava once he had received his help? How could there be any righteousness in someone who ordered us to search for Sītā only out of fear of Lakṣmaṇa, not out of fear of unrighteousness? What decent member of his family who wishes to stay alive would ever trust in that wicked, forgetful, fickle-minded ingrate? And whether he has good qualities or not, once Sugrīva has installed his son as king, how could he permit me, his enemy’s son, to live?

[9–15] “Since my plan has been disclosed and I have offended against him, how could I, powerless and weak as an orphan, survive once I reach Kiṣkindhā? Or, for the sake of the kingship, that deceitful, cruel, and crafty Sugrīva may inflict on me a secret punishment like imprisonment. It is better for me to fast to death than suffer imprisonment and despair. So bid me farewell, all you monkeys, and go home. I solemnly vow to you that I will not go back to the city. I will sit right here and fast to death. Death alone is best for me. But you must respectfully salute my younger father, King Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys, and wish him well. And you must wish my mother Rumā health and good fortune. Also, please console my mother

Tārā. By her very nature that poor woman is fond of her son and full of compassion, so when she hears that I have died here, she will surely give up her life.”

[16–20] This much he said, and then respectfully saluting his elders, Aṅgada, dispirited and weeping, sat down on sacred *darbha* grass spread on the ground. And as he sat there, the bulls among monkeys were saddened and wept, shedding hot tears from their eyes. Blaming Sugrīva and praising Vālin, they all surrounded Aṅgada and resolved to fast to death also. And so, once they had learned the intention of Vālin’s son, all those bulls among leaping monkeys sipped water and, assembling on the northern shore of the sea, sat down facing east on sacred *darbha* grass whose tips pointed to the south. Resembling huge mountain peaks, the many leaping monkeys sitting there roared so loudly that the mountain with its streams and caverns seemed to fill with the thundering of mighty storm clouds.

Sarga 55

[1–5] Now the king of the vultures happened to come to that very place on the mountain where all those tawny monkeys sat fasting to death. Saṃpāti was his name; and he was a long-lived, majestic sky-going bird famous for his strength and valor. He was the brother of Jaṭāyus. Emerging from a cave in the great Vindhya mountain, he spied the tawny monkeys sitting there, and in his delight he spoke these words: “They say that in this world a man’s destiny inevitably follows him. Accordingly, this food ordained for me has come to me at long last. I shall eat these monkeys one after another as they die.” So said the bird upon seeing the leaping monkeys.

[6–11] But when Aṅgada heard these words of that bird who was greedy for food, he was deeply distressed and said to Hanumān: “Look! With Sītā as a pretext, Yama Vaivasvata, the god of death, has come to this place in person to destroy the monkeys. Rāma’s purpose has not been accomplished, nor has the king’s command been carried out. And now this unexpected calamity has suddenly befallen the tawny monkeys. You have heard in its entirety the deed accomplished by the vulture king Jaṭāyus in his desire to help Vaidehī. So it is that all creatures, even those born as mere animals, will give up their lives as we are doing to help Rāma. Worn out for Rāghava’s sake, we have given up our lives. We have ventured into the wilderness but have not found Maithilī.

[12–15] “That vulture king was fortunate, for he was killed in battle by Rāvaṇa. Thus, he was free of fear of Sugrīva and has attained the highest state. Through the deaths of Jaṭāyus and King Daśaratha, and through the abduction of Vaidehī, we tawny monkeys have fallen into this danger. [d]The sojourn of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in the forest with Sītā, the slaying of Vālin with Rāghava’s arrow, the slaughter of all the *rākṣasas* through the wrath of Rāma—all this misfortune was caused by the granting of boons to Kaikeyī.”

[16–21] Now, when the sharp-beaked vulture heard these words that had come from Añgada’s mouth, he spoke in a loud voice: “Who is this who troubles my heart by announcing in such words the death of my brother Jaṭāyus, who is dearer to me than life itself? How did there come to be a battle in Janasthāna between the *rākṣasa* and the vulture? It has been a long time since I have heard my brother’s name. Bulls among monkeys, I would like to hear about the death of my younger brother, who recognized virtue and was praiseworthy for his valor. How was it that Daśaratha—whose beloved eldest son is Rāma, beloved by his elders—was a friend of my brother Jaṭāyus, who lived in Janasthāna? I cannot fly because my wings were burned by the sun’s rays, but I would like to come down from this mountain, tamers of your foes.”

Sarga 56

[1–3] Now although the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys heard his voice breaking with grief, they still did not trust his words and were afraid of what he might do. But as they were fasting to death, those leaping monkeys, seeing the vulture, made the terrible decision that he should eat them all, saying, “Since we are fasting to death in any case, if he eats us, we shall in every respect accomplish our purpose and therefore quickly achieve success.”

[4–8] All those bulls among monkeys concurred in that decision. So Añgada brought the vulture down from the mountain peak and said to him: “Winged one, there was a splendid lord of monkeys, a prince named Ṛkṣarajas. He was my ancestor; and his two righteous sons, begotten by him, were Sugrīva and Vālin, each as strong as a whole army. King Vālin, world famous for his deeds, was my father. Majestic Rāma Dāśarathi, king of the whole world and a great chariot-warrior of the Ikṣvākus, was devoted

to his father's commands and followed the path of righteousness. And so he entered the Daṇḍaka forest with his brother Lakṣmaṇa and with his wife, Vaidehī. But his wife was forcibly carried off from Janasthāna by Rāvaṇa.

[9–14] "Now the king of the vultures, Jaṭāyus by name, who was a friend of Rāma's father, saw Sītā, the daughter of Videha, being carried away through the sky. He deprived Rāvaṇa of his chariot and returned Maithilī to the earth; but since he was old and exhausted, he was slain in battle by Rāvaṇa. And so the vulture was killed by Rāvaṇa, who was more powerful than he. He was ritually cremated by Rāma and attained the highest state. Then Rāghava formed an alliance with my paternal uncle, great Sugrīva, and killed my father. For Sugrīva and his ministers were hostile to my father. And when Rāma had killed Vālin, he had Sugrīva consecrated. He established Sugrīva in the kingship as lord of the monkeys; and it was that king of the monkey lords who sent us out.

[15–19] "So, at Rāma's behest, we hunted here, there, and everywhere; but we did not find Vaidehī any more than one finds the sunlight at night. Then, after searching the Daṇḍaka forest most attentively, we entered, in our ignorance, a large cavern in the ground. And while we were searching that cavern constructed through the creative power of Maya, the month set by the king as a time limit for us elapsed. So although we are all obedient to the monkey king, we have nonetheless violated his decree. Now we are fasting to death out of fear. For if Kākutstha, Sugrīva, and Lakṣmaṇa are angry, we will not survive even if we all return."

Sarga 57

[1–7] Addressed in these piteous words by the monkeys who had given up hope of living, the tearful vulture replied to the monkeys in a loud voice: "It is my younger brother Jaṭāyus, monkeys, whom you have reported as killed in battle by mighty Rāvaṇa. Because I am old and without wings, I must endure hearing even that. For I no longer have the power to avenge my brother. Seeking victory, he and I long ago, at the time of Vṛtra's death, flew toward the sun, which blazed with its garland of sunbeams. Returning through the sky, we both flew with tremendous speed. But when the sun reached the meridian, Jaṭāyus began to grow faint. When I saw my brother tormented by the sun's rays and greatly afflicted, I covered him affectionately with my wings. But my wings were burned up, and so I fell

on Mount Vindhya. And since I have been living here, best of monkeys, I have had no news of my brother."

[8–10] When he was addressed in this fashion by Jaṭāyus's brother Saṃpāti, the very wise crown prince Añgada then replied: "If you are indeed Jaṭāyus's brother, and if you heard what I just said, tell us if you know this *rākṣasa*'s hiding place. If you know whether shortsighted Rāvaṇa, king of the *rākṣasas*, lives near or far away, then tell us."

[11–14] Then, to the delight of the monkeys, Jaṭāyus's glorious elder brother spoke words that were becoming to him: "Though I am only a vulture, leaping monkeys, whose wings are burned and whose strength is gone, through my words alone I shall provide great assistance to Rāma. For I know all about Varuṇa's worlds and Viṣṇu's three strides, as well as the wars of the gods and *asuras* and the churning of the nectar of immortality. Though old age has robbed me of my strength and my vital energies grow weak, my first duty is to accomplish this task of Rāma's.

[15–18] "I myself saw evil Rāvaṇa carrying off a beautiful young woman adorned with every ornament. Crying, 'Rāma! Rāma! Lakṣmaṇa!' she was throwing off her ornaments and was struggling in his grasp. Her fine silk garment was shining against the dark *rākṣasa* like the sun's light on a mountain peak or lightning against a thundercloud. I think it must have been Sītā, for she was calling out Rāma's name. Now listen as I describe that *rākṣasa*'s dwelling.

[19–23] "This *rākṣasa* is called Rāvaṇa. He is actually the son of Viśravas and brother of Kubera, and he inhabits the city of Lañkā. That lovely city, Lañkā, was built by Viśvakarman on an island in the ocean a full one hundred leagues from here. And it is there that sorrowful Vaidehī lives clothed in silk, imprisoned in Rāvaṇa's women's quarters, and closely watched by *rākṣasa* women. It is there in Lañkā, protected on all sides by the sea, that you will find King Janaka's daughter Maithilī. If you go down to the edge of the sea and then cross over to its southern shore a full one hundred leagues beyond, you will find Rāvaṇa there.

[24–27] "You must swiftly proceed there at once, leaping monkeys. I know by virtue of my special insight that you will surely find Sītā and return. The first path in the sky is that of the *kuliñgas* and of others who live on grain. The second is that of the crows, who eat ritual offerings, and of those who eat the fruit of trees. Kites and *krauñcas* travel on the third,

together with ospreys. On the fourth go falcons, while vultures use the fifth. The sixth path is that of the strong, vigorous *haṃsas*, young and beautiful. The highest is the path of the sons of Vinatā, and all of us are descended from Vinatā's son, bulls among monkeys.

[28–34] "We have become flesh-eaters by doing a forbidden deed. Standing right here, I can see the daughter of Janaka and Rāvaṇa. [e]We also have Suparṇa's divine power of vision. Therefore, both by our nature and by the potency of our food, we can always see farther than one hundred leagues, monkeys. For nature has ordained for our sustenance food seen from afar, just as the food right beneath their feet has been ordained for the sustenance of cocks, who fight with their feet. So you must find some means to cross the salt sea. Then, once you have recovered Vaidehī, you will have accomplished your object and can go home. But now I want you to lead me to the ocean, the abode of Varuṇa, for I would like to perform the water-offering for my great brother who has gone to heaven." And so the mighty monkeys led Saṃpāti, whose wings had been burned off, to a place on the shore of the ocean, lord of all rivers. Delighted to have obtained news, the monkeys carried the lord of the birds back to his own place.

Sarga 58

[1–4] When the bulls among leaping monkeys heard the words sweet as nectar that the vulture king had spoken, they repeated them and were delighted. Then Jāmbavān, best of tawny monkeys, sprang up from the ground with all the other leaping monkeys and spoke to the king of vultures: "Where is Sītā? Who saw her? Who carried off Maithilī? Please tell us everything and so become the salvation of us forest dwellers. Who is it that takes no heed of the power of the arrows of Lakṣmaṇa, Daśaratha's son, which strike with the force of thunderbolts when he himself looses them?"

[5–9] So to reassure further the joyful tawny monkeys who were eager to hear about Sītā, kindly Saṃpāti said these words: "Hear now how I learned of Vaidehī's abduction, by whom I was told, and where that large-eyed lady is now. Because I was old and my prowess and vital strength were failing, I fell long ago on this inaccessible mountain that stretches for many leagues. Since I am in such a condition, my son Supārśva, the best of creatures that fly, sustains me with food at the proper times. Intense desire is natural for

gandharvas, intense anger for serpents, intense fear for deer, and intense hunger for us birds.

[10–15] “Now one day after dark when I was suffering from hunger and longing for food, my son arrived without any meat. And so, because of my old age and my anger, and because I was overcome by hunger and thirst, I berated my son, the best of creatures that fly. Distressed because there was no food for me, the joy of my life begged my pardon and spoke these words truthfully: ‘Seeking meat at the proper time, father, I flew up into the sky and hovered, obstructing the pass of Mount Mahendra. There I stayed all alone looking down, to cut off the path of those thousands of creatures who live in the sea. And there I saw someone as black as a mound of collyrium moving along carrying a woman as radiant as a sunrise.

[16–19] “ ‘Since I wanted something to eat, I made up my mind when I saw those two. But in a conciliatory way, he politely asked me to let him pass. Nobody anywhere, even among the most despicable, attacks those who are conciliatory, so how could someone such as I do so? So he went by with such power that he seemed to compress the sky with his speed. Then I was approached by beings who could travel through the sky, and they greeted me. Those great seers said to me: “You are lucky to be alive, dear child! Since he had a woman with him, he has somehow passed you by. Undoubtedly, fortune is with you.”

[20–25] “ ‘That is the way those most glorious perfected beings addressed me. And they told me that it was Rāvaṇa, king of the *rākṣasas*, and that he was carrying off Rāma Dāśarathi’s wife, the daughter of Janaka. Her hair was flying loose, and her jewels and silk garment had slipped off. She was overcome by intense grief and cried out the names of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. And that is why I am late.’ Supārśva, foremost of the eloquent, said this, as he informed me of this entire matter. Yet even when I heard that, I had no thought of taking any heroic action. For without wings, how can a bird undertake any action? Still, I can do something through my faculties of speech and thought. Listen, and I shall tell you what it is; but it depends on your valor. By speech and intellect, I shall help you all, for Dāśarathi’s purpose is also mine. Of that there can be no doubt.

[26–29] “You are very resolute, powerful, and wise. When you join forces with the monkey king, even the gods cannot assail you. Moreover, the sharp, heron-fletched arrows of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are sufficient

either to protect or to destroy even the three worlds. It is no doubt true that ten-necked Rāvaṇa is splendid and mighty; still, nothing is impossible for you powerful creatures. So enough of this delay! Let your minds be resolute. For wise creatures like you do not hesitate to act."

Sarga 59

[1–3] When the vulture had offered the funerary libation for his brother and bathed, the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys sat all around him on that inaccessible mountain. Inspiring their confidence, Saṃpāti spoke again joyfully to Añgada, who sat near him, surrounded by all those tawny monkeys: "Keep still and listen to me attentively, tawny monkeys, and I shall tell you truly how I know about Maithilī.

[4–7] "Long ago, when I had been scorched by the sun's rays and my body overcome by its heat, I fell in a forest on a peak of these Vindhya mountains. When I regained consciousness after six nights, helpless and unsteady, I looked around in all directions but could recognize nothing. But as I beheld all the seas, mountains, rivers and lakes, and forests, and wooded places, my wits returned. I concluded then that these mountains on the shore of the southern sea with their peaks and deep caves, and flocks of joyful birds, must be the Vindhyas.

[8–11] "Now, there was a holy ashram there that even the gods revered. In it dwelt a seer of terrifying asceticism, named Niśākara. After Niśākara had gone to heaven, I lived here without the seer for eight thousand years, knowers of righteousness. Descending slowly and laboriously from a rugged peak of the Vindhyas, I regained with difficulty the level ground with its sharp *darbha* grass. For I wished to see that seer, whom Jaṭāyus and I had visited many times, and so very painfully I approached him.

[12–15] "In the vicinity of his ashram, fragrant winds were blowing and there were blossoms or fruits on every tree. Approaching that ashram, I rested against the roots of a tree and waited, eager to see holy Niśākara. Then close by I saw the unassailable seer, blazing with ascetic power, who was returning, his face to the north, after his ritual bath. Bears, gaur, tigers, lions, elephants, and snakes were approaching him on every side, as living creatures surround their benefactor.

[16–21] "Then, realizing that the seer had reached his ashram, those creatures withdrew, as do the whole army and the ministers when the king

has entered his private quarters. Then the seer, who was delighted to see me, reentered his ashram. But after a very short while, he emerged and asked my purpose in coming, saying: ‘Dear friend, seeing your lack of feathers, I did not recognize you. Your wings have been burned by fire and your skin has been scarred. In the past I used to see two vulture brothers, the equals of the wind in speed. They were both kings of vultures, who could change form at will. You, Saṃpāti, were the elder and Jaṭāyus was your younger brother. Taking on human form, you used to clasp my feet. Is this some sign of disease in you? Or is this a punishment inflicted by someone? How did your wings fall off? I ask you to tell me everything.’ ”

Sarga 60

[1–6] “Then I told the sage all about that terrible, impossible deed of following the sun that we had so rashly undertaken, saying: ‘Holy one, it is hard for me to speak because I am exhausted, and my senses are disturbed both by my injuries and by my shame. Jaṭāyus and I, heroes deluded by our pride, flew into the sky, vying with each other to test our prowess. On Kailāsa’s peak, in the presence of sages, we made a wager that we would pursue the sun as far as the great western mountain. We both reached the sky at the same time and saw, one after the other on the earth below, cities that seemed no bigger than chariot wheels. In one place we heard vedic recitations and the sound of musical instruments, while in another we saw many lovely young women dressed in red, singing.

[7–11] “ ‘Flying swiftly up to the sky, we reached the path of the sun and beheld a forest so far below that it looked like a plot of grass. The earth with its multitudes of mountains seemed strewn with mere stones, and the land with its rivers seemed overlaid with threads. On the round surface of the earth, Himalaya, Vindhya, and vast Mount Meru looked like elephants in a pond. But then we began to experience intense sweating, fatigue, and fear. And we were seized by confusion, which soon gave way to a dreadful stupor. We could no longer tell which way was south, southeast, or west. The fixed world seemed to have been destroyed, as if consumed by fire at the end of the world.

[12–16] “ ‘With a great effort we gazed once again at the shining sun, bringer of light, which by then looked as large as the earth to us. Then, without taking leave of me, Jaṭāyus plummeted toward the ground. When I

saw him, I swiftly hurled myself from the sky. Shielded by my wings, Jaṭāyus was not burned. But through my own carelessness, I was burned and fell from the sky, the pathway of the wind. I suspect that Jaṭāyus fell in Janasthāna, while I, with my wings burned, fell senseless in the Vindhya mountains. Bereft of my kingdom, my brother, my wings, and my strength, I wish only to die; and so I shall hurl myself from a mountain peak.' "

Sarga 61

[1–5] "When I had spoken this way to that best of sages, I wept in my great desolation. But after meditating for a moment, the holy one said this: 'You shall have new wings again and flight feathers as well, and also new eyes, vitality, valor, and strength. For in an ancient legend I heard about a very great matter that will come to pass. I know this both by hearing about it and by seeing it directly through the power of my asceticism. There will be a king, a descendant of the Ikṣvākus, named Daśaratha, and he will have a glorious son named Rāma. Truly valiant, he will go to the forest with his brother Lakṣmaṇa, directed to this end by his father.

[6–10] " 'The king of *rākṣasas*, a *rākṣasa* named Rāvaṇa, whom neither gods nor *dānavas* can kill, will abduct his wife from Janasthāna. Renowned and illustrious Maithilī will be so plunged in sorrow that she will not eat, even though enticed with desirable foods. Realizing this, Indra Vāsava will give Vaidehī a most excellent food that resembles nectar and is unavailable even to the gods. Receiving this food and recognizing that it is from Indra, Maithilī will remove a portion and scatter it on the ground for Rāma, saying: "This food is for my master Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa too, whether they are alive or have become gods."

[11–15] " 'Then leaping monkeys will come as messengers from Rāma to search for his queen; and you, sky-going bird, must tell them where she is. So by no means are you to leave here. In any case, where could you go in your condition? Just await the proper time and place, and you will recover your wings. Of course I could restore your wings right now; but if you stay here, you will perform a service that will benefit the whole world. This you must surely do for those two princes and for the brahmans, gods, sages, and Indra Vāsava. I too should like to see the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. However, I do not wish to remain alive that long, and so I shall abandon my body.' "

Sarga 62

[1–7] “And so, prophesying to me with these and many other words, the eloquent seer took leave of me and entered his ashram. But as for me, I crept very slowly from the mountain cave and climbed Mount Vindhya to wait for you. More than a hundred years have passed since then; but taking the sage’s words to heart, I kept waiting for the right time and place. But since Niśākara took the final journey and went to heaven, pain has tormented me, and I have been filled with many doubts. Still, by remembering the sage’s words, I have driven away thoughts of death as they arose. And the resolution he gave me to preserve my life dispels my sorrow as does a blazing flame the darkness. Since I knew the strength of evil Rāvaṇa, I scolded my son with these words: ‘Why did you not rescue Maithilī?’ For although my son heard her wailing and knew the two princes had been robbed of Sītā, he did not perform the service called for by my affection for Daśaratha.”

[8–12] And while Saṃpāti was speaking to the monkeys in this way, two wings sprouted on him before the very eyes of those forest dwellers. And when he saw the rosy-feathered wings that had appeared on his body, he felt unequaled joy and said this to the monkeys: “Through the power of the great seer Niśākara of boundless intellect, my wings, which were burned by the sun’s rays, have grown again. Now I feel the very same prowess, strength, and courage that I had in my youth. Make every effort. You will find Sītā. The fact that I have regained my wings should make you confident of success.”

[13–15] Then, when Saṃpāti, best of creatures that fly, had spoken in this way to all those tawny monkeys, he flew up from the mountain peak, a bird eager to test his flight. But those tigers among tawny monkeys heard his words with joyful hearts, anticipating the success their valor would bring. Then those best of leaping monkeys, who moved like the wind and who had regained their courage, went to the quarter facing Abhijit, eager to search for Janaka’s daughter.

Sarga 63

[1–4] Filled with joy at what the king of vultures had told them, the leaping monkeys, courageous as lions, leapt up all together and roared. Having heard Saṃpāti’s words, the delighted tawny monkeys, eager to see Sītā,

proceeded to the ocean, the abode of Rāvaṇa. Approaching it, the monkeys of terrifying valor gazed upon the ocean, which seemed like a whole reflection of the great world. Together those splendid monkeys reached the northern shore of the southern ocean and made camp there.

[5–8] But those elephants among monkeys lost heart when they saw that hair-raising ocean churning with waves. Filled with *dānava* lords who dwelt in the underworld Pātāla, and with all sorts of huge and grotesque creatures with enormous bodies and gaping mouths playing in its waters, in one place it seemed to sleep, in another it seemed to play, while in still another it was covered with billows the size of mountains. Gazing upon the sea, as impossible to cross as the sky, all the monkeys suddenly lost heart and said, "How can we possibly do it?"

[9–11] Noticing that the army had become despondent at the sight of the ocean, Aṅgada, best of tawny monkeys, comforted the fear-stricken tawny monkeys: "There is no need for us to be despondent. Despondency is very pernicious. Despondency destroys a person just as an angry snake destroys a child. This despondency is overpowering you just when the time for valor is at hand. The efforts of a person who is without valor never succeed."

[12–14] When the night had passed, Aṅgada and the monkeys met once again with the tawny monkey elders and took counsel. Surrounding Aṅgada, the monkey army looked as splendid as the host of Maruts surrounding Vāsava. For who else but Vālin's son, or perhaps Hanumān, would be able to steady the monkey army?

[15–20] First honoring the tawny monkey elders and the army, Aṅgada, majestic subduer of his foes, made this sensible speech: "Which powerful monkey will now leap across the sea? Which of us will make foe-conquering Sugrīva true to his promise? Which hero can leap a hundred leagues, leaping monkeys? Which one will free all these troop leaders from their great fear? Through whose favor shall we return from here happy and successful, to see once more our wives, our sons, and our homes? Through whose favor may we joyfully approach Rāma, mighty Lakṣmaṇa, and mighty Sugrīva? If there is among you any tawny monkey capable of leaping over the sea, let him now quickly give us the sacred gift of protection from danger."

[21–23] But when they heard Aṅgada's words, not one of them said a thing. Indeed, the entire army of tawny monkeys was as if transfixed. So

Aṅgada, best of tawny monkeys, addressed the tawny monkeys once again: "You are all outstanding among the mighty and unswerving in your valor. You were born in renowned families and have been honored repeatedly. Nothing has ever hindered any one of you in your movement. Let each of you then, bulls among leaping monkeys, declare how far he can leap."

Sarga 64

[1–2] Then, when those best of monkeys had heard Aṅgada's words, each of them—Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Mainda, Dvivida, Suṣeṇa, and Jāmbavān—declared in turn his own prowess at leaping.

[3–9] Gaja said, "I can jump ten leagues." And Gavākṣa stated, "I can jump twenty leagues." The monkey Gavaya then told the monkeys, "I can leap thirty leagues, leaping monkeys." The monkey Śarabha then said to the monkeys, "I can do forty leagues, without any doubt." Then valorous Gandhamādana told the monkeys, "Without a doubt I can go fifty leagues." And the monkey Mainda said to the monkeys, "I can leap more than sixty leagues." Then glorious Dvivida responded, "There is no doubt that I can do seventy leagues." The best of tawny monkeys Suṣeṇa declared to those outstanding apes, "I might do eighty leagues, bulls among leaping monkeys."

[10–13] As they were speaking, Jāmbavān, the eldest among them, honored them all and then responded: "Once I too had a certain prowess in leaping, but now I have reached the end of my prime. Even so, I cannot disregard this matter upon which both the king of the monkeys and Rāma are so firmly resolved. Know then how well I can leap now after all this time: I can leap ninety leagues without any doubt."

[14–17] And Jāmbavān spoke further to all those excellent tawny monkeys: "But my prowess in leaping was by no means always so limited. Long ago, at great Bali's sacrifice, I reverently circled eternal Viṣṇu of the three strides as he strode onward. Now I am old and my prowess in jumping is diminished. But in my youth no other could equal my strength. I suppose that at present I can go only so far; and that is not enough to bring about the success of this undertaking."

[18–19] Now wise Aṅgada honored the great monkey Jāmbavān and then made this noble response: "I can leap the great distance of a hundred

leagues, but I am not sure whether or not I have the power to return."

[20–27] But the best of tawny monkeys, eloquent Jāmbavān, said to him: "Your power to leap is well known, foremost of apes and monkeys. Granted you are capable of leaping a hundred or even a thousand leagues and returning, still it would not be proper for you to do so. For a commander is one who dispatches others, my child, and must on no account be dispatched himself. It is for you, best of leaping monkeys, to dispatch all of us. Since you have been established in the rank of commander, you are our wife. For the commander is the wife of the army, scorcher of your foes: that is the way of the world. Therefore, like a wife you must always be protected, my child. Moreover, you are the root of this undertaking, tamer of your foes. One must carefully guard the root of an undertaking. This is the policy of those who understand how things are to be done. If the root is intact, good results like flowers and fruits will surely follow. Therefore, you who are truly valiant and full of intelligence and valor are the only means for accomplishing this undertaking, scorcher of your foes. For you are our master and the son of our master, best of monkeys; only by relying on you will we be able to achieve our object."

[28–32] When wise Jāmbavān finished speaking, the great monkey Añgada, son of Vālin, made this reply: "But if neither I nor any of these other bulls among monkeys is to go, then surely we are again obliged to fast to death. For if we do not carry out the orders of the wise lord of tawny monkeys, I do not see how we can save our lives even if we return to him. For that tawny monkey has the power of clemency and even more so of punishment. If we went back without having carried out his instructions, we would die. You alone understand this matter. Therefore, please consider it carefully so that this undertaking does not fail."

[33–35] Answered by Añgada, Jāmbavān, that bull among leaping monkeys, then replied to him: "There is nothing lacking for this undertaking of yours, hero; and I shall now call upon the one who will accomplish it." Then the foremost of tawny monkeys, Jāmbavān, called upon that foremost of tawny monkeys and best of jumpers, renowned Hanumān, who was sitting at ease off by himself.

Sarga 65

[1–5] Perceiving that the army of tawny monkeys of hundreds of thousands was despondent, Jāmbavān spoke to Hanumān in this way: “Hero of the monkey folk, you are the best of those who know every *śāstra*. Why do you sit quietly by yourself without speaking, Hanumān? For you, Hanumān, are equal in valor and strength to Sugrīva, the king of the tawny monkeys, and even to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. You are as celebrated as Garuḍa, Ariṣṭanemin’s mighty son, the child of Vinatā and the greatest of all birds. Many times have I seen that illustrious, swift, and mighty bird snatching serpents from the ocean.

[6–11] “The might of your arms equals that of his wings, and your valor, speed, strength, wisdom, power, and courage are not less than his, best of tawny monkeys. Do you not realize that you are superior to all beings? The celebrated *apsaras* Puñjikasthalā, foremost among *apsarases*, was known as Añjanā, the wife of the tawny monkey Kesarin. Because of a curse, my child, she became a monkey who could change her form at will, a daughter of the great monkey lord Kuñjara. Although she was a monkey, she could change form at will and was lovely in every limb. Once, in the prime of her youth, she took human form and, wearing a costly silk garment and marvelous garlands and ornaments, she wandered about on the summit of a mountain that looked like a rain cloud.

[12–15] “And as the large-eyed woman stood on the mountaintop, Māruta, the wind god, gently pulled away her lovely yellow garment with its border of red. Then he saw her firm, rounded thighs, and her full, close-set breasts, and her fine and lovely face. When he saw this illustrious woman with her large, wide hips, her slender waist, and her beautiful limbs, Pavana, the wind god, was infatuated with desire. With his whole body overpowered by love and his heart lost to her, Māruta embraced that blameless woman with his stout arms.

[16–18–1356* ll. 3, 8] “But the virtuous woman became agitated and said these words: ‘Who wishes me to break my vow as a faithful wife?’ Hearing Añjanā’s words, Māruta replied: ‘Woman of lovely hips, I shall not harm you. Do not be afraid, lovely one. Illustrious woman, since by embracing you I have united with you through my mind, you shall bear a wise and mighty son.’ [f]Addressed in this way, great monkey, your mother was delighted. And so, in a cave she bore you, great-armed one, a bull among monkeys.

[19–22] “As a child in the great forest you once saw the sun rising, and thinking it was a fruit, you wished to seize it. So you leapt up and flew into the sky. You leapt upward for three hundred leagues, great monkey, and though the sun’s heat tormented you, you were not discouraged. But as you flew swiftly through the sky, great monkey, wise Indra was filled with rage and hurled his *vajra* at you. Then, as you fell on a mountain peak, your jaw [*hanu*] was broken on the left side. And that is why you are named Hanumān, ‘He of the Powerful Jaw.’

[23–28] “Now the bearer of fragrances, the wind god himself, seeing you stricken, became enraged at all three worlds. And so the tempestuous wind god ceased to blow. With the three worlds disturbed, all the gods became agitated, so those lords of the worlds propitiated angry Māruta. Once Pavana was propitiated, Brahmā gave you the boon that you could not be killed by any weapon in battle, dear child of true valor. Gratified at seeing you undamaged by the blow of his *vajra*, thousand-eyed Indra also gave you an excellent boon, which is that your death should occur only when you wish it, lord. And so, dreadful in your valor, you are both Kesarin’s son, since his wife bore you, and the flesh-and-blood son of Māruta, whom you equal in power. You are indeed the son of the wind, dear boy, and his equal in flight.

[29–32] “My vitality is gone now. Among us at present you alone are full of skill and valor, like a second king of the birds. At the time of Viṣṇu’s three strides, dear child, I reverently circled the world with its mountains, forests, and woods twenty-one times. At that time, I gathered, at the gods’ command, the herbs by means of which the nectar of the immortals was produced. I had great strength in those days. But now I am old, bereft of all prowess. At the present time you alone among us are possessed of all virtues.

[33–36] “Therefore, rouse yourself, for you are valiant and the greatest of jumpers. The whole monkey army is eager to witness your strength. Rise up, tiger among tawny monkeys. Leap across the great ocean. For your ability to leap, Hanumān, is beyond that of all other beings. All the tawny monkeys are despondent, Hanumān. Why do you not heed them? Show your prowess, as did mighty Viṣṇu when he took his three strides.” Urged on by Jāmbavān, Pavana’s monkey son, whose speed was well known, then delighted the army of tawny monkey heroes by making his body gigantic.

Sarga 66

[1–4] As he was being praised, mighty Hanumān began to grow. Growing mightier still, he waved his tail in delight. Praised by all those bulls among monkeys, he swelled with power, and his appearance was unsurpassed. The mighty jaws of Māruta's flesh-and-blood son now gaped wide like those of a huge lion in his mountain lair. And as wise Hanumān's jaws gaped open, his mouth, blazing like the sun, shone like a smokeless fire, the purifier.

[5–10] Rising up from the midst of the tawny monkeys, his fur bristling, Hanumān respectfully greeted the elder tawny monkeys and said this: "Anila, god of the wind, companion of fire the oblation eater, is boundless and strong. Ranging the sky, he shatters the mountaintops. And I am the flesh-and-blood son of that impetuous, swift-moving god of the wind, great Māruta. No one is my equal in leaping. For without pause I can go a thousand times around vast Mount Meru, which seems to touch the sky. Driving the ocean before me with the force of my arms, I could flood the world together with its mountains, rivers, and lakes. The force of my thighs and shanks will heave up the ocean, abode of Varuṇa, and stun its mighty sea creatures.

[11–14] "I can fly circles around the snake-eater Vainateya a thousand times as he flies through the sky attended by other birds. Even after the blazing sun garlanded with rays has set forth from the sunrise mountain, I can overtake it before it sets. And then, through my great and awesome speed, I can return without once touching the ground, bulls among leaping monkeys. I can outstrip all those who range the skies. I shall stir up the ocean! I shall tear up the earth!

[15–19] "In leaping I shall make the mountains tremble, leaping monkeys. And as I leap the sea, the force of my thighs will carry along the blossoms of vines, shrubs, and trees on every side. They will follow behind me as I leap through the sky this very day, so that my path will resemble the Milky Way in the heavens. All beings will see me leaping upward, flying through the terrible sky and alighting, monkeys. You shall see me, leaping monkeys, blocking out the sky like great Mount Meru, as I move along swallowing up the heavens as it were. I shall scatter the clouds. I shall make the mountains tremble. Intent upon my leaping, I shall stir up the sea.

[20–25] "Only King Suparṇa Vainateya, Māruta the wind god, and I have such power. Indeed, except for those two, I know of no being who

could keep pace with me as I leap. In no more than the time it takes to wink an eye, I shall rush swiftly across the self-supporting sky, like lightning streaking from a cloud. As I leap over the sea, my form will seem to be that of Viṣṇu when he made his three strides. I know in my mind that I shall find Vaidehī, and the workings of my heart tell me the same. So rejoice, leaping monkeys! Equal to Māruta in force and to Garuḍa in speed, I feel certain that I can jump ten thousand leagues. Attacking Indra Vāsava armed with his *vajra* or self-existent Brahmā, I could take the nectar of the immortals from their hands by force and bring it here. And I feel certain that I could even uproot Lañkā and carry it away."

[26–30] That finest of tawny monkeys, Jāmbavān, was thoroughly delighted and said to that excellent and immeasurably powerful monkey who was boasting in this fashion: "Heroic son of Kesarin! Swift offspring of Māruta! Dear child! You have dispelled the profound grief of your kinsmen. The assembled monkey chiefs, desiring your welfare, will earnestly offer blessings for the success of your undertaking. By the grace of the seers, by the grace of your superiors, and with the consent of the monkey elders, you must leap over the ocean! And we shall stand on one foot until your return, for the lives of all the forest-dwelling monkeys depend on you."

[31–33] Then Hanumān, that tiger among tawny monkeys, said to those forest-dwelling monkeys: "The earth will not withstand the force of my leap. But these peaks of Mount Mahendra, which abounds in masses of stone, are big and firm. [g]They will withstand the crushing force of my feet as I leap the hundred leagues from here, you foremost of those who leap."

[34–37] After that, tawny monkey, crusher of his foes, the son and very image of Māruta the wind god, climbed Mahendra, greatest of mountains. It was covered with all sorts of trees and full of creepers and flowers, while its trees were always laden with fruits and flowers, and its grassy plots frequented by deer. Full of waterfalls, it was inhabited by lions and tigers, frequented by rutting elephants, and noisy with its flocks of mating birds. His valor equal to great Indra's, that mighty and excellent tawny monkey strode across high-peaked, lofty Mount Mahendra.

[38–44] Crushed under the feet of that great monkey, the great mountain cried out like a mighty rutting elephant attacked by a lion. Out poured gushing streams of water, while masses of rock were scattered about, great

trees were violently shaken, and the deer and elephants were terrified. Hosts of *vidyādharas*, *gandharva* couples intent on drinking and sexual pleasure, and birds flying up—all abandoned the ridges of the great mountain. Its mighty serpents hid themselves and its rocks and stony peaks clashed together. Then, with those hissing serpents half-protruding from it, the mountain looked as if it were decked with flagpoles. Abandoned by seers fleeing in terror, the rocky mountain sank lower, like the heart of a traveler left behind in some vast wilderness by his caravan. Endowed with speed, intent on speed, that heroic slayer of enemy heroes, that wise and noble tawny monkey, composed his mind and turned his thoughts to Lañkā.

The end of the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*.

a Emendation: see PVR 4: 204–5.
b Emendation: see PVR 4: 283.
c Emendation: see PVR 4: 308.
d Emendation: see PVR 4: 338.
e Emendation: see PVR 4: 342.
f Emendation: see PVR 4: 359.
g Emendation: see PVR 4: 364.

Chapter 5
The *Sundarakāṇḍa*

Sarga 1

[1–3] Then Hanumān, tormentor of his foes, resolved to take to the sky, the path traveled by celestial bards, in order to find the place where Sītā, who had been carried off by Rāvaṇa, was. And so, frightening birds, shattering trees with his chest, and slaughtering many animals, the wise, resolute, and powerful monkey, like a great lion, freely ranged the lapis-hued meadows, which resembled bodies of water.

[4–6] The slope of that great mountain was ornamented with various minerals in their natural state: dark blue, pale pink, lotus-red, marbled black and white. It was constantly thronged with *yakṣas*, *kinnaras*, *gandharvas*, and great serpents. Resembling gods, accompanied by their attendants, they could take on any form at will. Standing there, on that slope filled with the foremost among the great serpents, the monkey himself looked like a great serpent in a lake.

[7–10] Cupping his hands in reverence to the sun god Sūrya, great Indra, the wind god Pavana, self-existent Brahmā, and all the great beings, he resolved to set forth. Facing east, the clever monkey cupped his hands in reverence to his father Pavana and then began to increase his size in preparation for his journey to the south. Thus, the monkey formed his resolution to jump. In order to fulfill Rāma's purpose, he increased in size —right before the eyes of the monkey leaders—as does the sea on the days of spring tide. In his desire to leap the ocean, he assumed a body of immeasurable size and pressed down on the mountain with his fore and hind feet.

[11–14] Pressed down by the monkey, the lovely mountain trembled for a moment so that it shook all the blossoms from its flowering trees. Covered all over with the fragrant mass of blossoms shaken loose from the trees, the mountain looked as if made of flowers. Pressed down by the enormously powerful monkey, the mountain poured forth its waters, as a

rutting elephant pours forth fluid from its temples. Pressed down by the powerful monkey, Mount Mahendra exposed veins of gold, antimony, and silver and let loose huge boulders tinged with red arsenic.

[15–19] The creatures dwelling in the mountain caves cried out in unnatural voices, as they were crushed by the mountain as it was pressed in upon them on every side. The din of these great creatures caused by the crushing of the mountain filled the parklands and the earth in all directions. The serpents, their broad hoods clearly showing their characteristic markings, struck at the rocks with their fangs, spewing forth dreadful fire, the purifier. Bitten by those enraged and venomous creatures, the huge boulders glowed—shining with purifying fire—and shattered into thousands of pieces. Even the dense thickets of medicinal herbs that grew on the mountain and could counteract poisons were unable to neutralize the venom of the serpent lords.

[20–24] The ascetics, thinking, "The mountain is being destroyed by some great creatures!" were terrified, while the *vidyādharas* flew up from there with their womenfolk. They left their golden seats and goblets in their drinking hall, along with their precious bowls and golden pitchers. They abandoned their soft delicacies and their various meats and other assorted delicacies. They left their bull-hide shields and golden-hilted swords. Still wearing their necklaces, their bodies decked with red garlands and ointments, intoxicated, their lotus eyes still red, they rose into the sky. Wearing their pearl necklaces, their anklets, their armlets, and their bracelets, the *vidyādhara* women, amazed and smiling, hovered in the sky with their lovers.

[25–28] Demonstrating their supernatural power, those great seers, the *vidyādharas*, hovered together in the sky gazing at the mountain. Then they heard these words uttered by the contemplative seers, celestial bards, and perfected beings who hovered there in the clear sky: "[a]This creature who looks like a mountain is Hanumān, the swift son of Māruta, the wind god. He wishes to cross the ocean, the abode of sea monsters. He wishes to reach the farther shore of the sea, so hard to reach; for he desires to accomplish this all-but-impossible feat for the sake of Rāma and the monkeys."

[29–33] Resembling a mountain, the monkey, his fur bristling, shook himself. He let out a mighty roar like a great thundercloud. As he made ready to leap, he wildly tossed about him his rounded, tapering tail, all

covered with fur, as Garuḍa, the king of birds, might toss a serpent. And indeed, trailing behind the swift monkey, his coiled tail resembled some great serpent being carried off by Garuḍa. Then, firmly planting his forefeet, which were like great iron bars, the monkey crouched down on his haunches and drew in his hind feet. Drawing in his arms and neck, the mighty, majestic creature summoned all his energy, might, and fortitude.

[34–40] He raised his eyes to look far along his path, gazed into the sky, and held his breath. Placing his hind feet firmly on the ground, mighty Hanumān, that elephant among monkeys, laid back his ears. As he prepared to leap, that best of monkeys spoke these words to the other monkeys: "Just as an arrow loosed by Rāghava would fly as swiftly as the wind, so shall I fly to Lañkā, the citadel guarded by Rāvaṇa. And if I do not find the daughter of Janaka there in Lañkā, then with that same speed I shall proceed to the realm of the gods. But if, despite these efforts, I do not find Sītā there in the highest heaven, I will bind Rāvaṇa, the king of the *rākṣasas*, and bring him here. One way or the other, I will accomplish my mission and return with Sītā, or else I will uproot Lañkā—Rāvaṇa and all—and bring it back." When swift Hanumān, the foremost of monkeys, had spoken in this fashion to the monkeys, he leapt swiftly into the air without further deliberation.

[41–45] So great was his speed that as he leapt up, the trees that grew on the mountain flew up after him on every side with all their branches pressed flat. And so he leapt up into the clear sky, and the force of his haunches was such that he carried with him the trees full of blossoms and love-maddened *koyaṣṭibhakas*. Drawn powerfully upward by the force of his haunches, the trees followed the monkey for a while, just as people follow a kinsman who is setting out on a long journey. Drawn up violently by the force of his haunches, the *sālas* and other great trees followed in Hanumān's wake, as soldiers follow their king. And thus, closely followed by so many trees in full blossom, the monkey Hanumān, who resembled a mountain, was a wonder to behold.

[46–49] The largest of the trees soon plunged into the salt sea, just as the mountains themselves had once plunged into the ocean, the abode of Varuṇa, in their fear of great Indra. Covered with all the different blossoms, buds, and sprouts, the monkey, who resembled a cloud, now looked like a mountain covered with fireflies. Torn loose by his rushing speed, the trees

shed their blossoms and fell back into the water, like friends turning back. But because they were so light, the various blossoms of the trees in all their different colors, driven onward by the wind stirred up by that monkey, drifted into the sea.

[50–53] With multicolored streams of blossoms clinging to him as he rose, the monkey resembled a cloud adorned with streaks of lightning. Strewn with the blossoms shaken loose by his speed, the ocean resembled the sky scattered with lovely, newly risen stars. His outstretched arms reaching into the sky looked like two great five-headed serpents rearing up from a mountain peak. The great monkey seemed to be devouring the vast ocean with its fretwork of waves. Indeed, he seemed intent on devouring the sky itself.

[54–59] And as Hanumān followed the path of the wind, his eyes, shining like lightning, blazed brightly like twin fires on a mountain. The great, round, yellow eyes of that foremost of yellow-eyed monkeys blazed like the moon and the sun. His face, tinted with the redness of his nose, looked red itself, just like the circle of the sun when it is tinged by twilight. And as the son of the wind leapt upward into the sky, his tail, flung out behind him, resembled the upraised flagstaff of Śakra. With his white fangs and encircling tail, the great and wise son of the wind god looked like the haloed sun, bringer of light. His reddish rump lent the great monkey the appearance of a mountain on which a vast area of red ore has been exposed through excavation.

[60–63] And as that lion among monkeys sped across the ocean, the wind rushing through his armpits roared like a thundercloud. That elephant among monkeys resembled a comet hurtling down from the highest reaches of heaven with its tail flung out behind. The huge monkey looked like the sun coursing through the sky or like an immense elephant with a girth bound around it. With his body up above and his shadow lying far below him, the monkey looked like a sailing ship at sea driven before the wind.

[64–69] As the great monkey sped onward, the portion of the sea beneath him seemed to be in the grip of a convulsive seizure due to the speed of his body. Shattering the ocean's mountainous fretwork of waves with his chest, the great monkey sped onward with tremendous speed. The powerful blast of wind stirred up by the monkey, together with the stiff breeze issuing from the clouds, violently agitated the sea so that it made a

terrible roar. He continued on his way with tremendous speed, ploughing through the great fretwork of waves in the salty ocean, as if to count them. Seeing that tiger among monkeys flying through the sky, the sea serpents took him for Suparṇa. The shadow of that lion among monkeys—ten leagues in breadth and thirty in length—looked very beautiful as it lay on the waters.

[70–74] Following along after the son of Vāyu the wind god, his shadow, spread across the salty sea, was as lovely as a streak of dark clouds against a bright sky. Seeing the leaping monkey flying so swiftly, the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* released a shower of blossoms. Sūrya, the sun god, did not burn that lord of the monkeys, and Vāyu served him as well in order to accomplish his purpose, Rāma's quest. The seers praised him as he flew through the sky, and the gods and *gandharvas* sang, praising that mighty monkey. Seeing the great monkey suddenly free from weariness in the sky, the great serpents, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, gods, and birds praised him.

[75–78] As Hanumān, that tiger among leaping monkeys, was flying along, Sāgara, the god of the ocean, wishing to honor the House of Ikṣvāku, thought: "If I do not assist Hanumān, the lord of monkeys, I shall surely be censured by all beings gifted with speech. For I was nourished by the Ikṣvāku lord Sagara, and this monkey is a counselor to the Ikṣvākus and so must not be allowed to fail. Therefore, I must arrange for this monkey to rest. Then, once he has rested on me, he will be able to leap the rest of the way easily."

[79–82] When he had thus formed this excellent resolution, Samudra, the god of the ocean, addressed Maināka, the great golden-peaked mountain who lay hidden beneath his waters: "The king of the gods set you here, best of mountains, to be a barrier against the hordes of *asuras* who inhabit the underworld known as Pātāla. And so you remain, barring the door against them whose might is well known and who are liable to rise up once more from the measureless realm of Pātāla. You have the power, O mountain, to extend yourself upward, downward, and on any side. Therefore, best of mountains, I beg of you, 'Rise up!'

[83–88] "For the mighty tiger among monkeys, Hanumān of awesome deeds, leaping into the sky for the sake of Rāma's quest, is passing over you. And I, of course, must render assistance to him, for he is acting in obedience to the House of Ikṣvāku; and the Ikṣvākus, whom I must

venerate, should be still more venerable to you. Please render me assistance. We must not neglect our duty, for the failure to perform one's obligations rouses the wrath of the virtuous. Rise up above the water so that the monkey may rest on you. For he, foremost among leaping monkeys, is our guest and we must honor him. Once Hanumān has rested upon you, mountain of the great golden peak and resort of gods and *gandharvas*, he can complete his journey. Taking into consideration Kākutstha's tenderheartedness, his separation from Sītā, the princess of Mithilā, and the weariness of this lord of the leaping monkeys, please rise up."

[89–93] When golden-peaked Maināka had heard the words of Sāgara of the salty waters, he immediately rose—all covered with great trees and clinging vines—above the waters. Like the bright-rayed sun, maker of day, breaking through the clouds, he parted the waters of the sea and grew to a great height. By virtue of the mountain's lofty golden peaks inhabited by *kinnaras* and great serpents—those golden peaks that painted the heavens like a sunrise—the steel blue sky was suffused with a golden light. Its golden peaks shining with an inner radiance, that foremost of mountains resembled a hundred suns.

[94–96] Hanumān was certain that the mountain, risen up so suddenly to stand before him in the midst of the salt waters, was an obstacle. So with his chest the great and very swift monkey pushed aside that mountain, which had risen so high, as the wind might push a cloud. Pushed aside by the monkey, the foremost of mountains, perceiving the monkey's speed, was delighted and rejoiced.

[97–100] [b]Seeing the heroic monkey in the sky, the mountain, who had risen into the sky himself, was delighted. His heart filled with joy, he took on a human form, and standing on his own summit, he addressed him: "This is an all-but-impossible feat you have accomplished, best of monkeys. Alight then on my peaks and rest comfortably. Sāgara, the repository of waters, was nourished by the sons of the House of Rāghava. Therefore, since you are engaged on Rāma's behalf, he is doing you honor in return. 'One good turn deserves another,' such is the time-honored custom. Since he now wishes to return that favor, he is worthy of your respect.

[101–104] "Out of respect for you and for your benefit, Sāgara enjoined me with the following words: 'This monkey has undertaken a leap of one hundred leagues. Let him rest on your slopes and then traverse the rest of

the way.’ So stay, tiger among tawny monkeys. Once you have rested upon me, you may depart. Here there is an abundance of sweet and fragrant bulbs, roots, and fruits. When you have tasted of it, best of tawny monkeys, and are rested, you may depart. Moreover, foremost of monkeys, I have a manifold relationship with you, one that is well known throughout the three worlds. Son of Māruta! Elephant among monkeys! I look upon you as the very foremost among those leaping monkeys who leap with such tremendous speed.

[105–107] “It is said that a guest, even an ordinary one, is deserving of reverence from a wise man who seeks to understand what is proper; how much more so is one such as you. For you, elephant among monkeys, are the son of great Māruta, foremost of the gods, and are his equal in speed. When you—who know what is right—are honored, then the wind god Māruta is honored as well. Therefore, I must honor you. Hear now the reason for this:

[108–112] “Long ago, my son, during the Kṛta Yuga, the mountains had wings and they used to fly in all directions with the speed of Garuḍa or the wind. And thus, when they would move about, the hosts of gods, along with the seers, and indeed all creatures, would be terrified with the fear of their falling. Thereupon thousand-eyed Indra of the hundred sacrifices was furious with the mountains, and with his *vajra* he hacked off their wings by the thousands wherever he found them. But when the king of the gods confronted me in his rage, his *vajra* raised, I was suddenly swept aside by the great wind god. And then, best of leaping monkeys, I was hurled down intact into these salty waters, my wings preserved, saved by your father.

[113–115] “Therefore, I greatly honor you; for you are deserving of my honor, Māruta. This then is my manifold relationship to you, foremost of monkeys. Since this obligation on the part of Sāgara and myself has arisen in this fashion, great monkey, please incline your heart favorably toward us and favor us. Cast off your weariness, best of monkeys, accept my reverence, and acknowledge my affection. I am favored by your sight alone.”

[116–120] When the best of monkeys had been addressed in this fashion, he said this to the great mountain: “I am already favored; for you have offered full hospitality. Please do not be angry. But the time allotted for my mission is fleeting, and the day is getting on as well. Moreover, I gave my

solemn word, so I must not stop here in the middle.” When he had spoken in this fashion, that mighty bull among tawny monkeys touched the mountain with his hand, rose into the sky, and proceeded on his way, smiling gently. Thus, the son of the wind, having been shown great honor by both the mountain and the mighty ocean and having been worshiped with appropriate blessings, left them both behind. Leaping high, he regained his father’s path and flew on through the clear sky.

[121–129] Rising once more to a great height and looking down on that mountain, the son of the wind went on his way through the clear and unsupported sky. When the gods, perfected beings, and great seers had witnessed this second supremely difficult feat, they all praised him. All the gods who were present, including the thousand-eyed Indra Vāsava, were delighted with that deed of the golden mountain with its lovely peaks. And so wise Indra, the lord of Śacī, his voice trembling with delight, spoke these words directly to that foremost of mountains with its lovely peaks: “I am very pleased with you, golden-peaked lord of mountains, and I grant you immunity. You may rest at ease. You rendered very great assistance to bold and fearless Hanumān as he leapt a hundred leagues despite the danger. This tawny monkey is on his way as an emissary of Rāma Dāśarathi. Because you have greeted him as hospitably as you could, I am very pleased with you.” Seeing that the lord of the gods, Indra of the hundred sacrifices, was pleased, that foremost of mountains experienced the greatest delight. When the mountain had received this boon, he resumed his place beneath the waves, but as for Hanumān, after a moment he resumed his leap over the ocean.

[130–133] Then the gods, along with the *gandharvas*, perfected beings, and great seers, addressed Surasā, mother of great serpents, who was as resplendent as the sun: “The wind god’s majestic son, whose name is Hanumān, is leaping over the ocean. Take on the dreadful form of a female *rākṣasa*, huge as a mountain, with yellow eyes and a pair of jaws fanged and gaping so that they touch the very heavens. Please create a momentary obstacle for him. For we wish to ascertain his strength and his valor. Will he foil you through some stratagem, or will he give way to despair?”

[134–136] When the goddess Surasā had been addressed in this fashion and treated with such respect by the gods, she stood in the middle of the ocean taking on the deformed and hideous appearance of a *rākṣasa*,

terrifying to all. Obstructing Hanumān as he flew onward, she said this: "The gods have ordained you as my food, bull among monkeys. I am going to eat you, so get into my mouth."

[137–143] When that majestic bull among monkeys had been addressed by Surasā, he cupped his hands in reverence, and with his delight evident in his face, he said these words: "Rāma, who is known as Dāśarathi, entered the Daṇḍaka forest with his brother Lakṣmaṇa and his wife, Vaidehī. The *rākṣasas* have an implacable hatred for him, and while he was engaged in some activity, Rāvaṇa abducted his illustrious wife, Sītā. At Rāma's command, I am on my way to her side as his messenger. You should render assistance to Rāma, for you dwell in his kingdom. Or else once I have seen Maithilī and tireless Rāma, I shall return and enter your mouth, I promise you this faithfully." When Surasā, who could change her form at will, had been addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, she replied: "No one can escape me, for such is my boon." Addressed in this fashion by Surasā, the bull among monkeys became angry and replied: "Then make your mouth big enough to hold me."

[144–149] Having spoken these words in anger to Surasā, Hanumān grew to a height of ten leagues. When Surasā saw that he had expanded himself to a distance of ten leagues so that he resembled a huge cloud, she opened her mouth to a distance of twenty leagues. Hanumān, however, in a rage, extended himself to thirty leagues, and Surasā then stretched her jaws to a height of forty leagues. Then heroic Hanumān extended himself to the height of fifty leagues, and Surasā stretched her jaws to a distance of sixty leagues. Heroic Hanumān grew to a height of seventy leagues, while Surasā stretched her jaws to a distance of eighty. Then Hanumān, who now resembled a mountain, extended himself to the height of ninety leagues, and Surasā stretched her jaws to a distance of one hundred leagues.

[150–156] But when Māruti, the wise son of the wind god, who resembled a great cloud, saw the gaping mouth of Surasā with its long tongue, looking like hell itself, he contracted his body so that in an instant he was no bigger than a thumb. He entered her mouth and flew out. Then that swift and majestic monkey hovered in the sky and said these words: "Homage to you, Dākṣāyaṇi. I have entered your mouth. Now I shall go to where Vaidehī is. May your words ever prove true." When the goddess Surasā saw that the monkey had escaped from her jaws, as the moon is

freed from Rāhu, demon of the eclipse, she resumed her true form and addressed him: “Go as you please, gentle friend, in order to accomplish your quest. Best among tawny monkeys, you must reunite Vaidehī with great Rāghava.” When they witnessed this third, nearly impossible feat on the part of Hanumān, all the great beings praised that tawny monkey, crying, “Wonderful! Wonderful!”

[157–165] But he who was as swift as Garuḍa, lord of the birds, flew up into the sky and proceeded on his way, moving across the unconquerable ocean, the abode of the sea god Varuṇa. Drawn along in the monkey’s wake, great clouds shone brightly in the auspicious path of the sun and moon. That path was sprinkled by showers of rain and thronged with birds, frequented by masters of the Kaiśika style of dramatic performance, and made lovely by rainbows. It was adorned with shining chariots that flew along, drawn by lions, elephants, tigers, birds, and serpents. It was beautified by purifying fires as intense in force as the *vajra* or the thunderbolt, and it was graced by great persons who had won the heavenly world through the performance of meritorious deeds. It was frequently marked by the blazing sacrificial fire that bore offerings; and it was adorned with planets, constellations, the moon, the sun, and all the hosts of stars. It was thronged with hosts of great seers, *gandharvas*, great serpents, and *yakṣas*. It was pure and spotless, limitless, and frequented by Viśvāvasu, the king of the *gandharvas*. The auspicious path of the sun and moon, it was trodden by the elephant of the king of the gods. Indeed, it was a canopy fashioned by Brahmā and spread out above the world of living beings. It was frequented by many heroes and the foremost hosts of *vidyādharas*. Plunging into the clouds, then emerging again and again, he resembled the moon as it enters and emerges from the clouds in the rainy season.

[166–169] Seeing him flying along, a huge *rākṣasa* woman named Siṃhikā, who could take on any form at will, had the following thought: “Now, at long last, I shall get something to eat! For after so long, this great creature has come within my grasp.” And thinking thus to herself, she caught hold of his shadow. When his shadow had been seized, the monkey thought: “I have been caught; for suddenly, like a great ship on the ocean checked by unfavorable winds, I am unable to move forward.”

[170–173] Looking up and down and all around him, the monkey spied a huge creature rising from the salt sea and thought: “Without a doubt this is

that mighty, extraordinary-looking creature, the shadow catcher mentioned by the monkey king.” Recognizing her as Siṃhikā from the nature of his situation, the clever monkey grew to enormous size, like a cloud in the rainy season. When she saw the body of the great monkey expanding, she stretched her jaws as wide apart as the sky and underworld Pātāla.

[174–177] The great and clever monkey noted her huge and hideous jaws, the full extent of her body, and her vital spots. But once inside her open mouth, the powerful monkey instantly contracted his adamantine body and flew out. Perfected beings and celestial bards saw him vanish in her mouth, like the moon on a night when it is full, swallowed up by Rāhu, demon of the eclipse. With his sharp claws the monkey slashed her vital organs and flew up swiftly, moving with the speed of thought.

[178–181] When all the beings who roamed the heavens saw Siṃhikā fallen, quickly slain by the monkey, they addressed that bull among leaping monkeys: “In killing this mighty creature today, you have accomplished a formidable feat. Now you may accomplish your chosen quest without hindrance, best of leaping monkeys. For he who, like you, possesses the four virtues of firmness, foresight, intelligence, and skill never fails in his undertakings.” Thus honored by them, that honorable monkey, his goal practically accomplished, flew on through the sky like Garuḍa, devourer of serpents.

[182–184] Having almost reached the farther shore, he looked around and saw there, at the end of the hundred leagues, a line of trees. As he flew along, that foremost among monkeys spied an island adorned with all kinds of trees, and he saw the groves on the Malaya mountains. He saw the ocean, and the marshes of the ocean, and the trees growing in the ocean’s marshes. And he saw the mouths of the rivers, the ocean’s wives.

[185–190] As the wise and self-controlled monkey surveyed his own body, which resembled a vast cloud that seemed to block out the sky, he came to a decision. The great monkey thought, “If the *rākṣasas* should see the size of my body and my speed, they will become curious about me.” So contracting his body, which was like a mountain, he resumed his natural form, as might a self-controlled person when all worldly delusions have vanished. Having reached the farther shore of the sea and having examined his body, he took on a form unobtainable by any other. And in that lovely and variegated form, he considered how to proceed. Then the great monkey,

who resembled a great mountain peak, alighted on a lofty peak of Mount Lamba, which, with its *ketaka* shrubs, *uddālaka* trees, and coconut palms, resembled a mass of beautiful things. And so having thus through sheer strength crossed over the sea—filled with *dānavas* and serpents and garlanded with towering waves—he landed on the shore of the mighty ocean and gazed upon Laṅkā, which was like Amarāvatī, the city of Indra.

Sarga 2

[1–4] Having crossed the unconquerable ocean, powerful Hanumān gazed calmly upon the city of Laṅkā, which stood on the peak of Mount Trikūṭa. Standing there, covered with showers of blossoms loosed from the trees, the mighty monkey looked as though he were made of flowers. And even though he had traveled a hundred leagues, that majestic monkey, endowed with extraordinary power, was not winded and felt no fatigue, thinking: "I could easily traverse many hundreds of leagues; how easy then to reach this shore of the ocean, which accounts for a mere hundred."

[5–8] Then, having leapt the vast ocean, Hanumān, foremost among the mighty and most eminent of leaping monkeys, proceeded swiftly to Laṅkā. He passed through deep blue meadows and fragrant woodlands filled with boulders and great trees. And Hanumān, powerful bull among leaping monkeys, strode onward past thickly forested hills and groves of blossoming trees. Standing on that mountain, the son of the wind god spied woods and parks and the city of Laṅkā.

[9–13] The great monkey saw lovely parklands and all kinds of lakes and pleasure groves completely covered with every sort of tree that blossomed and bore fruit in all seasons. There were *sarala*, *karṇikāra*, and *kharjūra* trees in full blossom. There were *priyālas*, *muculindas*, *kuṭajas*, and *ketakas* as well. There were *priyaṅgu* trees that were filled with fragrance; there were *nīpas* and *saptacchadas* too. There were *asanas*, *kovidāras*, and flowering *karavīras*. And all these trees were thick with masses of blossoms and yet still budding. They were filled with birds, and their crowns waved gently in the breeze. And he saw ponds thronged with *haṃsas* and *kāraṇḍavas* and covered with red and blue lotuses.

[14–18] Approaching Laṅkā, fortunate Hanumān gazed upon that city, which was under the protection of Rāvaṇa and adorned with moats covered with red and blue lotuses. Because of the abduction of Sītā, Rāvaṇa had it

especially well guarded by *rākṣasas* who patrolled it on every side, wielding fearsome bows. It was a great and lovely fortress, surrounded by a golden rampart, bristling with hundreds of towers, and wearing a garland of flags and banners. It had heavenly golden gateways decorated with vine motifs. Such was the city of Laṅkā—like the city of the gods in heaven—that Hanumān gazed upon. With its splendid white mansions, Laṅkā, set high on the mountain peak, looked to that majestic monkey like a city in the sky.

[19–22] Hanumān gazed upon that city, built by Viśvakarman and protected by the lord of the *rākṣasas*, as if upon a city floating in the sky. It was as filled with horrible *rākṣasas* as is the city of Bhogavatī with its great serpents. Beautifully made and gleaming, it was unimaginable; for it had previously been the home of Kubera, lord of wealth. Guarded by vast numbers of *rākṣasa* warriors with protruding fangs and with lances and spears in their hands, it was as formidable as a cave guarded by venomous serpents. With its embankments and ramparts for thighs and its wide moats for new garments, with its lances and hundred-slayers for long hair and towers for earrings, the city resembled a woman.

[23–29] The monkey reached the northern gate, which resembled the peak of Mount Kailāsa and seemed to scrape the sky. With its wonderful lofty mansions, it seemed as if it were propping up the sky. He fell to brooding. Taking into consideration the ocean and the city's immense fortification and reflecting upon what a dreadful foe Rāvaṇa was, the monkey was plunged into gloomy thought: "Even if the tawny monkeys could get here, they would be able to accomplish nothing, for not even the gods themselves could conquer Laṅkā in battle. Even if great-armed Rāghava himself should reach this impregnable fortress of Laṅkā, which is under the protection of Rāvaṇa, what could he do? When it comes to the *rākṣasas*, there is no scope for conciliation, nor is there any scope for bribery, sowing dissension, or open warfare. Only four of the great monkeys, Aṅgada the son of Vālin, Nīla, myself, and wise King Sugrīva, can even reach this place. Let me first find out whether or not Vaidehī is still alive. Once I have found the daughter of Janaka, I will decide what to do."

[30–33] Then the foremost among monkeys, devoted to Rāma's success, reflected for a moment as he stood there on that mountain peak: "In my

present form, I will never be able to enter the *rākṣasas*' city, guarded as it is by fierce and powerful *rākṣasas*. The *rākṣasas* have fierce energy, great valor, and enormous strength. I must deceive them all if I am to search for Jānakī. Taking an inconspicuous form, I shall enter the city of Laṅkā by night. That is the proper time for me to accomplish this great task."

[34–38] Seeing what the city was like—unassailable by the gods or the *asuras*—Hanumān sighed repeatedly and fell once more to brooding: "By what means can I find Janaka's daughter Maithilī without being seen by Rāvaṇa, the evil lord of the *rākṣasas*? How can the failure of wise Rāma's mission be avoided? How can I manage to see Janaka's daughter in a secluded spot, with just the two of us present? If the place and time are not propitious, or if the agent is injudicious, even well-conceived plans can come to nothing, like darkness at sunrise. Even a firm decision as to what ought or ought not be done can come to nothing. For messengers who think they are clever can destroy an undertaking.

[39–43] "How can the failure of the mission be avoided? How can I avoid making a blunder? How can I ensure that my leaping over the ocean will not prove to have been in vain? If the *rākṣasas* should see me, then this mission of wise Rāma, who seeks the destruction of Rāvaṇa, would surely fail. Even were I to assume the form of a *rākṣasa*, it would be impossible to pass unnoticed by the *rākṣasas*. What chance would I have in any other form? It seems to me that not even the wind can pass undetected here, for there is nothing that these mighty *rākṣasas* do not notice. If I remain here in my natural size, I will surely be destroyed, and thus my master's mission will fail.

[44–126*–46ef] "Therefore, retaining my natural shape, I shall make myself very small and enter Laṅkā at night in order to accomplish Rāghava's mission. I shall enter Rāvaṇa's impregnable fortress tonight, and I shall search his entire palace until I find Janaka's daughter." Thus did the mighty monkey Hanumān deliberate, as, in his eagerness to find Vaidehī, he anxiously waited for the sun to set. [c]Once the sun had set and night had fallen, Māruti contracted his body until he was no bigger than a cat. It was a wonderful sight to see.

[47–51] At evening time mighty Hanumān leapt up swiftly and entered that lovely city with its well-laid-out avenues. He gazed upon the great city. With its long rows of palaces, its columns of gold and silver, and its

fretwork of gold, it was like a city of the *gandharvas*. It had seven- and eight-storied buildings whose floors were inlaid with crystal and ornamented with gold. The mansions of the *rākṣasas* were resplendent, their floors ornamented with fretwork of pearl and variegated with lapis lazuli and gemstones. The lovely, golden gateways of the *rākṣasas* illuminated the well-adorned city of Laṅkā on every side.

[52–55] As the great monkey, anxious to find Vaidehī, gazed upon unimaginable Laṅkā so marvelous in appearance, he was at once both thrilled and despondent. He entered the glorious city, which was protected by the arms of Rāvaṇa and filled with night-roaming *rākṣasas* of dreadful strength. Its rows of white mansions were crowded up against each other, and its gateways were covered with fretwork of precious *jāmbūnada* gold. Then, shining in the midst of the multitudes of stars and flooding the world with a mass of light, the many-rayed moon rose as if to render him assistance. The mighty monkey gazed upon the radiant moon as it rose. It shone like a conch shell and was as white as the color of milk or lotus fiber. Indeed, it looked like a *haṃsa* swimming swiftly in a lake.

Sarga 3

[1–7] And so that night, there on a lofty peak of Mount Lamba, which resembled a lofty cloud, wise and mighty Hanumān, elephant among monkeys and son of the wind god, relying on his own great strength, entered the city of Laṅkā, filled with lovely woods and waterways and guarded by Rāvaṇa. It was made lovely by its great mansions, resembling autumnal clouds; it was cooled by sea breezes, and it sounded like the sea itself. It was guarded by stout troops just as is Viṭapāvatī. Its gleaming white gates and archways were adorned with beautiful reliefs. Filled with serpents and well protected, it was as lovely as Bhogavatī. It was covered with lightning-streaked clouds and crossed by the paths of the heavenly bodies. Resounding with the sound of fierce winds, like Indra's city Amarāvatī, it was completely surrounded by a great rampart of gold. It was adorned with banners that jingled with thousands of tiny bells. Swiftly reaching this city, Hanumān approached the rampart with great excitement.

[8–11] As Hanumān gazed all around him at the city of Laṅkā, his heart was filled with wonder. Its gateways were of *jāmbūnada* gold; the enclosures within them were paved with emeralds. Those gateways were

adorned with mosaics of gemstones, crystals, and pearls. And they were adorned with reliefs of refined gold and shone brightly with silver. Their floors and stairways were made of emerald. And their crystalline interiors were utterly spotless. They had beautiful courtyards. Their structures seemed almost to soar into the sky. They echoed with the sound of *krauñcas* and peacocks, and they were thronged by *rājahaṃsas*. The city resounded on every side with the sounds of musical instruments and ornaments.

[12–17] As the monkey Hanumān looked upon the city of Lañkā, which resembled the city of Vasvokasārā and seemed to soar into the sky, he was filled with joy. But as he surveyed the beautiful city of the *rākṣasa* lord, prosperous and unsurpassed Lañkā, the mighty monkey fell once more to brooding: "No one can take this city by force, for it is protected by Rāvaṇa's troops carrying their weapons at the ready. This place is notorious. Kumuda, Añgada, the great monkey Suṣeṇa, Mainda, and Dvivida might be able to reach it. But only Vivasvant's son Sugrīva, the tawny monkey Kuśaparvan, the ape Ketumāla, and I are able to enter it." Still, as the monkey reflected upon the might of great-armed Rāghava and the valor of Lakṣmaṇa, he was reassured.

[18–21] With precious gems for garments, storehouses for earrings, and catapult-turrets for breasts, the city looked to him like a beautiful, richly ornamented woman. Thus did the great monkey gaze upon the city of the lord of the *rākṣasas*, where all darkness was dispelled by lamps and illuminated palaces. Entering by night, the powerful son of Māruta struck out on the main highway adorned with pearls and blossoms. With its splendid mansions resounding with the sounds of laughter and musical instruments, marked with *vajras* and elephant goads, and ornamented with diamond fretwork, the city was as lovely as the sky with its great clouds.

[22–25] At that hour, Lañkā was glittering with the splendid mansions of the *rākṣasas*. Those mansions of various types—the *svastika*, the *padma*, and *vardhamāna*—beautifully ornamented on every side, resembled great white clouds. Roaming on Rāghava's behalf through the city with its various garlands and ornaments, the majestic monkey, acting for the benefit of the monkey king, looked about him and rejoiced. He heard the sweet singing of impassioned women, like that of the *apsarases* in heaven. It was embellished with sounds produced from the three organs of articulation. And he heard the tinkling of ladies' belt ornaments and the jingling of their

anklets, and he heard the sound of footsteps on the stairs coming from the houses of the great. And here and there he heard the sound of hands clapping and the murmur of pleasant conversation.

[26–30] He saw *yātudhānas* engaged in vedic recitation, and he saw *rākṣasas* roaring out their praise of Rāvaṇa. A large force of *rākṣasas* was stationed so as to guard the royal highway. And in the central encampment he saw many agents of the *rākṣasa*'s secret police. Some of the *rākṣasas* had been consecrated to perform sacrifices; some wore the matted locks of ascetics; some had shaven heads; some were clad in cowhide, and others were naked; some were armed with handfuls of *darbha* grass, and others were equipped with vessels for the sacrificial fire. Some held mallets and war hammers in their hands; others were armed with staves. Some had only one eye or one ear; some had pendulous breasts that shook when they moved. Some had protruding fangs and distorted faces; some were misshapen; some were dwarfs; some were armed with bows and others with swords; some were armed with hundred-slayers and others with cudgels; some had great iron clubs in their hands; and some were resplendent in their marvelous armor.

[31–34ab–168* line 1] There were some who were neither too fat, too thin, too tall, nor too short. Some were hideous; some had mutilated forms; some were handsome; and others were resplendent. And the great monkey saw some *rākṣasas* armed with javelins and *vṛkṣas*, some who bore spears and darts, and still others with slings and nooses. Some wore garlands and were smeared with unguent; some were adorned with the finest ornaments; some bore sharp lances; others were very powerful and bore *vajras*. [d]And that monkey saw the central protective force, which was vigilant and consisted of one hundred thousand troops, stationed by the lord of the *rākṣasas* in front of the walled city.

[168* ll. 2–4–34cd–37] [e]Then the great monkey spied the palace of the lord of *rākṣasas* with its great golden archways. It was renowned and situated on the mountain peak. It was encircled by moats and crested with white lotuses, and it was entirely enclosed within a protective rampart. And so, the monkey approached the well-guarded palace of the lord of the *rākṣasas*. It was heavenly and resembled Indra's heaven Triviṣṭapa, and it resounded with heavenly sounds. For it was filled with the sound of the neighing of horses and resounded with the sound of ornaments. It was

adorned with chariots, carriages, and flying palaces, with exquisite elephants and horses, and with great four-tusked bull elephants that resembled masses of white clouds. It had lovely gates and was adorned with animals and birds in the throes of passion.

Sarga 4

[1–3] Then the wise monkey saw the brilliant, many-rayed moon in the middle of the sky, spreading around it a great canopy of brilliance. It resembled a lusty bull roaming his pen. And he watched the cool-rayed moon as it rose, ending the sorrows of all the world, causing the sea to rise, and illuminating all beings. The splendor that on earth is reflected in Mount Mandara and at evening is reflected upon the sea, the splendor that in the waters is reflected in the lotus, now shone forth reflected in the beautiful moon, maker of night.

[4–7] Like a *haṃsa* in a silver cage or a lion in a cave on Mount Mandara, like a hero mounted on a haughty elephant, so did the moon shine forth in the sky. Rising like a sharp-horned bull, like a great white mountain with its lofty peak, like an elephant whose tusks are bound with gold, the moon shone forth, its form fully revealed. The blessed, heavenly evening was luminous, its darkness banished by the rising of the brilliant moon; its danger—the flesh-eating of the *rākṣasas*—increased; its troubles—lovers' quarrels—now banished. The sound of stringed instruments pleasing to the ear could be heard. Virtuous women slept next to their husbands, while rangers of the night, whose deeds were marvelous and dreadful, set forth to take their pleasure.

[8–13] The wise monkey saw mansions—one after another—filled with amorous and intoxicated people, crowded with chariots, horses, and golden seats, and filled with the splendor of warriors. The *rākṣasas* were quarreling among themselves, flinging their powerful arms about. They babbled drunkenly and ridiculed one another as drunkards. He saw *rākṣasas* beating their chests and throwing their arms about their beloveds. And lovely women were applying cosmetics to their bodies, while others went on sleeping. With its great trumpeting elephants, its virtuous men receiving great honor, and its warrior heroes heaving angry sighs, the city resembled a lake filled with hissing serpents. And there in the city Hanumān saw *yātudhānas*, who were outstanding in intelligence, mellifluous in speech,

firm in their faith, engaged in various occupations, and with sweet-sounding names. Indeed, some of them were among the foremost people in the world. Some of them were very beautiful. They possessed various virtues and had the looks to match them. Some of them were radiantly handsome, while some, on the other hand, were very ugly. Gazing upon them, Hanumān was filled with joy.

[14–19] And there he saw their women. They were worthy of the finest things. Pure in mind and noble in spirit, their thoughts were constantly focused on their beloveds and their intoxicating beverages. Indeed, in their radiance they resembled the stars. Some that he saw were radiant with splendor, and some were overcome with modesty. Others, there in the night, were wrapped in the tight embraces of their lovers, transported with delight, like birds nestled in flowers. And the wise monkey saw other women on different floors of tall mansions seated comfortably in the laps of their lovers. They were given over to righteousness, dear to their lords, and devoted to them. They were overwhelmed with passion. The heroic tawny monkey saw exquisite women without their upper garments. They were separated from their lovers, and with their fine complexions—like burnished gold or moonlight—they looked like streaks of gold. Then he saw other ravishing women who, having gone out to meet their lovers, were experiencing the greatest delight. And he also saw supremely enchanting women who achieved delight in their own homes. He glimpsed many faces as radiant as the moon, many eyes with curling lashes, and many ornaments that looked like streaks of lightning.

[20–24] [f]But he did not see the slender, mind-born Sītā of lofty lineage, who was born in a royal family fixed in the path of righteousness and who was as lovely as a creeper in full bloom. She was fixed in the eternal path. Her glance was for Rāma alone, and she was consumed with love for him. She had entered fully into her husband’s noble heart, and at all times she surpassed even the most outstanding women. She was tormented with the burning pangs of love. Once, her throat had been adorned with the most splendid gold ornaments; now it was filled with a never-ending flow of tears. With her sweet voice and lovely eyelashes, she now resembled a peahen wandering the woods. She resembled a faint sliver of the moon, a streak of gold obscured by dust, an arrow wound superficially healed, or a wisp of cloud torn off by the wind. When, after a long time, the leaping

monkey had not found Sītā, the wife of Rāma, lord of men and foremost among the eloquent, he was suddenly overwhelmed with sorrow and seemed incapable of going on.

Sarga 5

[1–3] Wandering freely among those great mansions, the monkey, who could take on any form at will, moved swiftly through Laṅkā. Then the handsome monkey came upon the dwelling of the *rākṣasa* lord, encircled by a shining rampart as golden as the sun. Gazing upon that mansion—as well guarded by terrible *rākṣasas* as is the deep forest by lions—that elephant among monkeys appeared radiant.

[4–12] That mansion had marvelous gateway arches inlaid with silver and embellished with gold. It was enclosed by wonderful courtyards and splendid gates. It was filled with mahouts mounted on elephants and with tireless warriors whose chariots were drawn by unstoppable horses. It was constantly traversed by splendid, rumbling chariots covered with the skins of lions and tigers and embellished with ivory, gold, and silver. It was filled with many jewels and with precious seats and vessels. It was the home of mighty chariot-warriors and their great chariots. Everywhere it was filled with thousands and thousands of beautiful birds and animals, pleasing to the eye, of every kind. It was very well guarded by *rākṣasas* and well-trained border guards, and everywhere it was filled with the most exquisite of beautiful women. It was filled with lovely and happy women and with the mansions of *rākṣasa* lords. Because of the jingling of fine ornaments, it sounded like the sea. It held all the articles necessary to show devotion to the king and had the very choicest sandalwood. It was filled with the sound of *mṛdaṅga* and *bherī* drums and echoed with the blowing of conch-shell trumpets. There was constant worship going on, and vedic fire sacrifices were performed on the *parvan* days, for the *rākṣasas* were always engaged in religious observances. It was as profound as the ocean, and it echoed with the same deep sound.

[13–17] The great monkey gazed upon the vast palace of the great lord, which was covered with great gemstones and filled with eminent citizens. It shone with its splendor, and it was crowded with elephants, horses, and chariots. Indeed, the great monkey thought it was the very ornament of all of Laṅkā. Moving from one *rākṣasa* home to another and across parklands,

the monkey roamed fearlessly among the palaces, searching everywhere. Leaping from the house of Prahasta, the swift and powerful monkey leapt onto Mahāpārśva's dwelling. Then the great monkey leapt to the house of Kumbhakarṇa, which looked like a great storm cloud, and from there to the house of Vibhīṣaṇa.

[18–25] From there the great monkey leapt in turn to the houses of Mahodara, Virūpākṣa, Vidyujjihva, Vidyunmāli, and Vajradaṃṣṭra. Then that swift leader of troops of tawny monkeys proceeded to the houses of Śuka, wise Sāraṇa, and Indrajit. After that the leader of the troops of tawny monkeys moved from there to the mansions of Jambumālin, Sumāli, Raśmiketu, and Sūryaśatru. Then the son of Māruta proceeded to the mansions of Dhūmrākṣa, Saṃpāti, Vidyudrūpa, Bhīma, Ghana, and Vighana. One after another, the son of Māruta went to the houses of Śukanābha, Vakra, Śaṭha, Vikaṭa, Hrasvakarṇa, Daṃṣṭra, the *rākṣasa* Romaśa, Yuddhonmatta, Matta, Dhvajagrīva, Nādin, Vidyujjihva, Indrajihva, Hastimukha, the *piśāca* Karāla, and Śoṇitākṣa as well. And in every one of those luxurious mansions, the great and glorious monkey observed the wealth of those wealthy *rākṣasas*.

[26–33] When he had leapt over the mansions of all of them on every side, the handsome monkey at last came to the dwelling of the lord of the *rākṣasas*. Prowling around there, that best of tawny monkeys, that tiger among tawny monkeys, saw evil-eyed *rākṣasa* women—lances and war hammers in hand, bearing javelins and iron cudgels—who slept close to Rāvaṇa. And there, in the house of the lord of the *rākṣasas*, he saw various companies of troops. In the compound, he saw swift steeds tethered, some bay and some white, and he saw beautiful thoroughbred war-elephants, destroyers of enemy elephants. They were exceedingly well trained, like Airāvata himself in battle. And they were destroyers of enemy forces. Pouring forth streams of rut fluid, they resembled rain clouds or mountains with their cascades. They trumpeted with a sound like thunder, and they were unassailable by enemies in battle. And he saw thousands of troops all decked out in *jāmbūnada* gold; and there in the dwelling of Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, the monkey, son of Māruta, saw many different kinds of palanquins. Completely covered with fretwork of *hemajāla* gold, they shone like the newly risen sun.

[34–38] There in the dwelling of Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, he saw lovely creeper-covered bowers, buildings with picture galleries, and still other buildings for play, as well as little hillocks made of wood. There was a delightful building just for lovemaking, and there were buildings for daytime activities. He gazed at that magnificent palace, which, filled with banners and flagstaffs and covered with areas set aside for peacocks, resembled Mount Mandara. With its endless heaps of gems and masses of treasure on every side, it was like the dwelling of the lord of beings. It had been won through the profound penances undertaken by Rāvaṇa, that master of self-possession. By the brilliance of its precious stones and the blazing splendor of Rāvaṇa himself, that palace shone as brightly as does the many-rayed sun by virtue of its rays.

[39–42] There the leader of the troops of tawny monkeys saw beds, chairs, and splendid drinking vessels all made of *jāmbūnada* gold. Flowing with honey-wine and spirits and filled with jeweled vessels, the palace was as delightful and spacious as the palace of Kubera himself. And so Hanumān entered that great, vast palace compound with its well-laid-out courtyards. It was filled with hundreds of exquisite women and lined with rows of lofty palaces. The whole compound resounded with the beating of *mṛdañgas* and other instruments, the tinkling of women's belt ornaments, and the jingling of their anklets.

Sarga 6

[1–4] The mighty monkey gazed upon rows of buildings all inlaid with fretwork of gold and lapis lazuli. They looked like a massive bank of clouds in the rainy season, laced with streaks of lightning and flocks of birds. He saw the many different chambers of the mansions and great storerooms for conches, weapons, and bows. And on the top of those buildings, tall as mountains, he saw broad and lovely terraces. The monkey gazed on those buildings, resplendent with every type of wealth and much esteemed even by the gods and *asuras*. They were free from any defect and had been won by Rāvaṇa through his own might. He gazed upon the great buildings of the lord of Lañkā, which were foremost in every quality on earth. They were constructed with great care and seemed as if they had been built by Maya himself.

[5–10] Then he spied the fabulous palace of the lord of the *rākṣasas*, which was commensurate with his enormous power. It was lofty and resembled a great cloud; it was captivating with its golden splendor. Its beauty had no rival. Blazing with splendor and covered with innumerable gems, it looked like heaven fallen to earth. Surrounded with all kinds of trees and covered with flowers, it looked like a mountaintop dusted with pollen. With its exquisite women it was as resplendent as a storm cloud illuminated by flashes of lightning. It had all the splendor of a flying palace—reward of saintly people—drawn through the air by splendid *haṃsas*. Just as a mountain peak is tinged with the colors of many minerals, just as the heavens sparkle with the moon and the planets, just as a mass of clouds reflects varying hues, so was that superb flying palace rendered colorful by virtue of its many gems. On it was rendered the earth complete with its mountain ranges. The mountains were rendered with their canopy of trees, the trees with their canopy of blossoms, and each blossom with its petals and filaments. White mansions had been rendered there, and lotus ponds filled with blossoms. And there were lotuses complete with their filaments as well as dense and beautiful woodlands.

[11–14] The great monkey gazed upon that vast and resplendent flying palace called Puṣpa. It towered above even the other great mansions; and yet—through the radiance of its gems—it seemed to be even larger than it was. It had birds made of lapis and birds fashioned of silver and coral. And there were beautiful serpents, wrought of various costly materials, as well as horses with exquisite bodies fashioned to resemble the different breeds. There were birds with beautiful faces and lovely wings. They had flowers wrought of coral and *jāmbūnada* gold inlaid on their wings; and those wings, held sportively extended, seemed to be, as it were, accomplices of Kāma, the god of love. Holding blue lotuses in their lovely trunks, those elephants were covered with lotus filaments. And there, in a lotus pond, was the goddess Lakṣmī holding lotuses in her beautiful hands.

[15–17] Approaching Rāvaṇa's splendid, beautiful, and magnificent palace, which looked like a mountain, Hanumān was struck with wonder. It was as lovely as a fragrant tree whose hollows are lovely at winter's end. When he had reached that venerable city protected by the arms of ten-faced Rāvaṇa, the monkey roamed about but did not see the highly venerable, but deeply sorrowful, daughter of Janaka, who had been won by the force of her

lord's virtues. Continuing to wander about, great and clear-sighted Hanumān—whose mind was oppressed by many cares and who always trod the path of righteousness—was unable, despite his strenuous efforts, to find the daughter of Janaka. At last his mind gave way to deep despair.

Sarga 7

[1–4] In the midst of that fabulous residence, Hanumān, the son of Māruta, saw a broad and spacious palace. The palace compound of the *rākṣasa* lord was one and a half leagues in length and one league in breadth. It was crowded with many mansions. Nonetheless, Hanumān, subduer of his enemies, combed every inch of it searching for long-eyed Sītā Vaidehī. It was surrounded by elephants, some with four tusks, some with two, and some with three; and it was protected by guards with weapons raised. Yet it was not crowded.

[5–8] The palace of Rāvaṇa was filled with *rākṣasa* women and with princesses he had abducted by force to be his wives. It resembled an ocean filled with crocodiles and sharks, teeming with whales and great fish, full of serpents, and tossed by violent winds. The same imperishable royal splendor that characterizes Kubera Vaiśravaṇa and Indra of the bay steeds was forever inseparably associated with the House of Rāvaṇa. Whatever opulence was to be found in the palaces of King Kubera, Yama, and Varuṇa, equal or even greater opulence was to be found here in the mansions of the *rākṣasas*.

[9–13] There, within that residential complex, the son of Pavana the wind god saw a separate, exquisitely constructed palace adorned with many beautiful reliefs. It was the heavenly flying palace known as Puṣpaka. It was adorned with every gem, and it had been made in heaven by Viśvakarman on behalf of Brahmā. It was the same one that Kubera had acquired from Grandfather Brahmā through supreme austerities and that the lord of the *rākṣasas* had obtained by conquering Kubera through the force of arms. It was supported by finely wrought pillars that were fashioned of gold and silver and embossed with an animal motif. It seemed ablaze with splendor. It was adorned everywhere with exquisite penthouses, which, resembling Mount Meru and Mount Mandara, seemed almost to scrape the sky.

[14–17] The great monkey then climbed the heavenly flying palace Puṣpaka, which had been finely wrought by Viśvakarman and which, with its golden staircases and its lovely raised platforms, resembled the blazing sun. Its ornamental skylights and windows were of gold and crystal; and its raised platforms were set with lovely emeralds and sapphires. Standing there, he smelled a divine and intense aroma of food, drinks, and rice. It rose so powerfully that the air itself seemed to have substance. That aroma seemed to say to that great being—as a friend might to a close friend—“Come over here where Rāvaṇa is.”

[18–22] Heading in that direction, he saw a spacious and beautiful hall, which was as dear to Rāvaṇa’s heart as a beautiful, deeply beloved woman. It was variegated with jeweled staircases and radiant with lattices of gold; its floors were inlaid with crystal; and it was decorated with panels inlaid with ivory. It was adorned with pearls, coral, silver, and gold, and with jeweled columns. Indeed, it was adorned with innumerable columns. Supported by those columns that were straight, smooth, tall, and beautifully ornamented on every side, it seemed almost to soar into the heavens on them as if on wings. It was covered with a huge carpet, woven to resemble the surface of the earth; and it seemed as wide as the earth itself with its towns and countryside.

[23–29] That hall echoed with the cries of impassioned birds and was redolent with heavenly fragrances. It was covered with costly fabrics. It was indeed the abode of the lord of the *rākṣasas*. It was filled with the smoke of aloe incense; it was spotless and white as a *haṃsa*; it was as beautifully variegated with floral offerings as a splendid brindled cow. It refreshed the spirit and brightened the complexion. It banished all sorrow. It was heavenly and like the very source of all splendor. Like a mother, that palace, under the protection of Rāvaṇa, catered to the five senses with the very finest of the five objects of sense. Māruti thought: “This must be heaven! This must be the realm of the gods! This must be the citadel of Indra! Or perhaps, it is the highest goal of perfection!” He saw golden lamps, which seemed as if lost in gloomy thought, like crooked gamblers outdone in dicing by still more crooked ones. What with the brilliance of its lamps, the splendor of Rāvaṇa, and the radiance of its dazzling ornaments, the hall seemed to him to be ablaze with light.

[30–34] And there he saw reclining on the carpet a thousand beautiful women. They were wearing clothes and garlands of all different colors, and they wore every sort of dress and ornament. It was past midnight, and they had all succumbed to the power of drink and sleep. They had ceased their amorous play and now slept soundly in the dead of night. Lying there in slumber, the various sounds of their ornaments stilled, they collectively resembled a vast bed of lotuses whose *haṃsas* and bees had fallen silent. Māruti gazed upon the faces—fragrant as lotuses—of those beautiful women, their eyes closed and their teeth concealed. Their faces resembled lotuses that had awakened with the waning of the dark and once more closed their petals at night.

[35–40] The great and majestic monkey reflected that their faces shared the qualities of water-born lotuses, and he aptly thought: "Surely intoxicated bees must repeatedly seek out these lotuslike faces as if they were blooming lotuses sprung from the waters." Still further beautified by those women, the hall of the *rākṣasa* lord was as lovely as the clear autumnal sky adorned with stars. Surrounded by these lovely women, the lord of the *rākṣasas* looked as beautiful as the majestic moon, the lord of the night, surrounded by stars. The tawny monkey thought: "It must be that all the stars fallen from the sky have gathered here, retaining yet some portion of their merit." The splendor, beauty, and radiance of those women shone forth as clearly as that of large and brilliant stars.

[41–45] The women lay there, their consciousness stolen by slumber. Their thick and heavy garlands were disordered, and their fine jewelry lay scattered about them from their bouts of drinking and physical exertions. Some of them had their *tilakas* smudged, and some had their anklets all awry; while some of those beautiful women had their necklaces tossed to one side. The pearl necklaces of some had been broken; the garments of others had fallen away. Indeed, with their belt-strings snapped, they resembled young fillies relieved of their heavy loads. Some of them, wearing beautiful earrings, their garlands crushed and torn, resembled flowering creepers crushed by mighty elephants in the great forest. Splendid pearl necklaces—shining with the luster of moonbeams—rested like sleeping *haṃsas* between the breasts of some of the women.

[46–49] The lapis lazuli necklaces that some wore looked like *kādamba* birds, while the gold chains of others resembled *cakravāka* birds. Their

buttocks resembling sandbanks, the women looked like rivers crowded with *haṃsas* and *kāraṇḍavas* and adorned with *cakravākas*. With their masses of tiny bells for lotus buds and their large gold ornaments for full-blown lotuses, with their amorous gestures for crocodiles and their radiant beauty for banks, the sleeping women resembled rivers. The lovely marks left on some of them, impressed on their tender limbs and nipples by their ornaments, looked like the ornaments themselves.

[50–53] Trembling in the breath from their mouths, the fringes of the garments of some of them fluttered up over their faces again and again. And fluttering there, those lovely, shining fringes resembled banners waving around the faces of those wives, their complexions lovely and various. The pendant earrings of some of those radiantly beautiful women were swinging slowly from the touch of the breath from their mouths. Their sweet breath, so naturally fragrant, wafted over Rāvaṇa with the added fragrance of sweet wine.

[54–59] Some of Rāvaṇa's women kissed the faces of their rivals again and again under the false impression that their faces were his. Their thoughts thoroughly focused on Rāvaṇa, no longer in control of themselves, those beautiful women gave pleasure to their rivals. Some of those beautiful young women—all adorned with bracelets—lay cushioning their heads on their arms and on their lovely upper garments. One of them lay on another's breast and yet another upon her arm. One lay on another's lap, while yet another lay across the first one's arms. They all lay there mutually intertwined, resting on each other's thighs, sides, buttocks, and backs. In the grip of love and intoxication, they lay there, their bodies all entangled with one another. Those slender-waisted women slept, their arms intertwined, experiencing deep pleasure from the touch of one another's bodies.

[60–64] That garland of women threaded, as it were, on the string of one another's arms was as lovely as a floral garland threaded on a string and swarming with intoxicated bees. The multitude of Rāvaṇa's women resembled a thicket of creepers in full bloom in the springtime month of Mādhava: a thicket swarming with bees, where all the plants seemed woven together into garlands through the motion of the breeze, their clusters of blossoms pressed together, their branches entwined. Even when the women's ornaments, limbs, garments, and garlands were clearly in their proper places, it was impossible to determine which ones belonged to

whom. Only because Rāvaṇa was sound asleep did those blazing golden lamps unblinkingly gaze upon those women of manifold splendor.

[65–67] For these women were the daughters of royal seers, the *pitṛs*, the *daityas*, *gandharvas*, and *rākṣasas*. And they were all passionately in love with him. That immensely powerful warrior had not taken a single one of the women there by force; rather, they had been won over by his virtues. With the sole exception of Janaka's daughter, who was deserving of only the best, not one of them desired another man or had previously belonged to one. Not one of his wives had lowly origins; not one was deficient in beauty. Not one was unskilled, and none was lacking in good breeding. Not one was wanting in health, and there was none whom her husband did not desire.

[68–69] Suddenly the pure-minded lord of the tawny monkeys was struck by this thought: "If the lawful wife of Rāghava is in any way like these wives of the *rākṣasa* king, then it is a lucky thing for him indeed." Then, overwhelmed once more by sorrow, he thought: "But surely Sītā's virtues make her unique, and then too, the mighty lord of Lañkā has perpetrated a foul offense against her, an act unfitting to an *āryan*."

Sarga 8

[1–4] Gazing about him, Hanumān noticed one bed that stood out from the rest. It was made of crystal and adorned with gems, a bed such as one might find in heaven. On one side of it, he saw a white umbrella adorned with magnificent garlands and resembling the moon, lord of stars. Perfumed with various fragrances and covered with the smoke of costly incense, the bed was fanned on every side by female attendants holding yak-tail fly whisks in their hands. It was piled with exquisite coverlets and covered with sheepskins. It was adorned on all sides with garlands of lovely flowers.

[5–9] On that glittering bed, the great monkey saw the mighty lord of the *rākṣasas* sleeping. With his red eyes, great arms, garments shot with gold, and his precious dazzling earrings, he resembled a great storm cloud. His body smeared with fragrant red sandalwood paste, he truly resembled a cloud laced with streaks of lightning and reddened in the sky at twilight. He was handsome and could take on any form at will. Surrounded by heavenly ornaments, he looked like Mount Mandara slumbering with its trees, forests, and thickets. He had now ceased his dalliance for the night and left

off his drinking. And there—adorned with costly jewelry—he lay, the beloved of the *rākṣasa* maidens and the bringer of delight to the *rākṣasas*.

[10–12] Approaching Rāvaṇa, who was breathing like a great hissing serpent, that best of monkeys, greatly agitated, drew back as if in fear. Reaching the staircase and ascending to the landing, the great monkey contemplated that sleeping tiger among *rākṣasas*. With the lord of the *rākṣasas* sleeping on it, the magnificent bed resembled mighty Mount Prasravaṇa with an indomitable elephant bull asleep on it.

[13–20] Hanumān saw the two arms of that huge lord of the *rākṣasas*. Flung wide and adorned with golden bangles, they were like two flagstaffs of Indra. They had been scarred by the blows of the tips of Airāvata's tusks. His muscular shoulders had been marked by Indra's *vajra* and wounded by Viṣṇu's discus. His shoulders were muscular, symmetrical, well knit, and powerful. His hands were characterized by beautiful fingers and palms, and his nails and thumbs were marked with auspicious signs. Solid and shapely, his arms were like great iron beams and looked like elephant trunks. Flung wide on that beautiful bed, they looked like five-headed serpents. They were beautifully ornamented and well anointed with costly sandalwood paste—fragrant, cooling, and as crimson as hare's blood. Although they were caressed by the most beautiful women and perfumed with the finest scents, they nonetheless made *yakṣas*, great serpents, *gandharvas*, gods, and *dānavas* cry out in fear. As the monkey gazed upon Rāvaṇa's arms spread out across the bed, they seemed to him like two immense and wrathful serpents sleeping in a cave on Mount Mandara. With his two immense arms, the lord of the *rākṣasas*—who seemed as large as a mountain—resembled Mount Mandara with its twin peaks.

[21–27] A powerful exhalation issued from the mouth of that lion among *rākṣasas* as he lay there. It bore the fragrance of mango and *puṃnāga* blossoms and of the finest *bakula* flowers. It was mingled with the aroma of savory foods and permeated with the smell of strong drink. It seemed to fill the chamber. His crown, slightly awry, shone with gold and glittered with pearls. His face was illuminated by his earrings. With his broad, deep, and muscular chest anointed with red sandalwood paste and adorned with a splendid necklace of pearls, he looked resplendent. His eyes were bloodred, and he was clad in white silk, which was now awry, and in a fine and costly yellow upper garment. Dark as a heap of black beans and breathing like a

hissing snake, he resembled an elephant sleeping in the vast waters of the Ganges. His entire body was illuminated by four golden lamps that lit up all directions as flashes of lightning light up a thundercloud.

[28–33] The great *rākṣasa* lord was fond of his wives; and there, in his hall, Hanumān saw them clustered at their master's feet. The leader of troops of tawny monkeys gazed once more at those women. Their faces were as radiant as the moon, and they were adorned with splendid earrings. They wore jewelry and unfading garlands. They were skillful in dancing and playing musical instruments, but now the monkey saw them wearing splendid jewelry and lying across the lap and arms of the *rākṣasa* lord. Near their ears he saw earrings and armlets of burnished gold inlaid with diamond and lapis lazuli. The entire palace was illuminated by their lovely moonlike faces and their exquisite earrings, as is the evening sky by the hosts of stars. Fatigued from the exertions of love, the slender-waisted wives of the *rākṣasa* lord would sleep during the pauses in their lovemaking.

[34–39] One of the ladies of the court, sleeping with her arms around her *viṇā*, looked like a lotus plant torn loose by a mighty river and clinging to a buoy. Another dark-eyed beauty, sleeping with her *maḍḍuka* nestling at her side, resembled a doting mother sleeping with her infant son. Yet another, a woman with beautiful breasts and lovely in every respect, lay embracing her *paṭaha*, like a woman embracing her long-lost lover. Still another lovely, lotus-eyed woman lay sleeping, embracing her flute as if she had fallen asleep with her lover. Yet another, her eyes inflamed with passion, had fallen asleep tightly clutching a *mṛdaṅga* with her golden limbs, so soft, full, and enchanting. Yet another flawless, slender-waisted woman—exhausted by her passionate lovemaking—slept with her *paṇava* tucked under her arm at her side.

[40–45] Another lovely woman, holding a *ḍiṇḍima*, had fallen asleep tightly embracing a second *ḍiṇḍima*, like a woman who, still clutching her infant, nonetheless embraces her lover. Still another woman, stupefied by drink, her eyes like lotus petals, had fallen asleep clasping her *āḍambara* in her arms. Another lovely lady, who had spilled her jug of water as she fell asleep, looked like a freshly sprinkled spring garland made colorful by different blossoms. Yet another young woman, overcome by the power of sleep, lay sleeping, her breasts—like golden pitchers—cupped in her hands.

Exhausted by passionate lovemaking, one woman—her eyes like lotus petals, her hips beautiful, and her face like the full moon—slept embracing yet another. Those exquisite women slept with their various instruments pressed to their bosoms, like lovers embraced by their beloveds.

[46–50] Then the monkey saw one extraordinarily beautiful woman sleeping on a magnificent bed that was set apart from those of the other women. She was beautifully adorned with jewelry studded with pearls, and she seemed to ornament that magnificent palace with her own radiant beauty. It was fair Mandodarī, the beautiful, golden-skinned, and deeply beloved queen of the inner apartments, that the monkey saw sleeping there. When he saw her so richly bejeweled, the great-armed son of Māruta reasoned on the basis of her extraordinary beauty and youth, "This must be Sītā!" And filled with tremendous excitement, the leader of the troops of tawny monkeys rejoiced. He clapped his upper arms and kissed his tail. He rejoiced, he frolicked, he sang, he capered about. He bounded up the columns and leapt back to the ground, all the while clearly showing his monkey nature.

Sarga 9

[1–3] But the great monkey dismissed that notion and, once more recovering his composure, took up another line of thought concerning Sītā: "That lovely lady would never sleep apart from Rāma, nor would she eat, drink, or adorn herself. Nor would she ever go near another man, even the lord of the gods. For Rāma has no peer, even among the thirty gods themselves. This must be someone else." Having reached this conclusion, he once more roamed the drinking hall.

[4–9] Some of the women were exhausted from playing, some from singing, and some from dancing, while still others lay under the influence of drink. Some lay resting on their *murajas*, *mṛdaṅgas*, and hassocks, while other women rested on fine coverlets. And the leader of the troops of tawny monkeys saw Rāvaṇa, who, having left off his lovemaking, lay sleeping, surrounded by a thousand bejeweled women. They were given to conversing about matters of beauty and to discussing the proper meanings of their songs. They were knowledgeable about the proper time and place for various activities, and they knew the appropriate words for all occasions. In their midst the great-armed lord of the *rākṣasas* looked as

splendid as a bull surrounded by magnificent cows in a vast cowpen. And that lord of the *rākṣasas*, surrounded by his women, resembled a great bull elephant surrounded by his cows in the forest.

[10–15ab] There, in the house of the lord of the *rākṣasas*, the tiger among monkeys gazed upon the great *rākṣasa*'s drinking hall, replete with everything one could desire. In that drinking hall he saw portions of meat set out: venison, buffalo, and boar. And the tiger among monkeys saw half-eaten peacocks and jungle fowl on large golden platters. Hanumān saw boars and *vārdhrāṇasakas*, prepared with curd and *sauvarcala* salt. And there were also porcupine, deer, and peacocks; as well as various kinds of *kṛkaras* and half-eaten *cakoras*; buffalo, *ekaśalya* fish, and goats, all well seasoned. And there were soft delicacies, all manner of drink, and every sort of food, along with various kinds of condiments: sour, salty, and pungent.

[15cd–20] With costly pearl necklaces, anklets, and bracelets scattered about, and with all kinds of fruit strewn among the drinking vessels, the floor, covered with floral offerings, took on an even greater splendor. With its finely wrought beds placed here and there, the drinking hall seemed to be ablaze without fire. And there, along with many different kinds of meats that had been exquisitely prepared by master chefs and set out in the drinking hall, he saw various heavenly crystal-clear spirits, both natural and fortified. There were rum, mead, and fruit and flower wines, all flavored with various fragrant powders. The floor, strewn with heaped-up garlands and covered with silver jars, crystal vessels, and other vessels of *jāmbūnada* gold, looked beautiful.

[21–25] And there in jars of silver and *jāmbūnada* gold, the monkey saw great quantities of the finest drink. The great monkey saw brimming wine vessels made of gold, jewels, and silver. Some of the beverages that he saw had been half-drunk, some completely consumed, while others had not even been touched. Thus did he wander about seeing here various foods, and there drinks served out in portions, and elsewhere the leftover food. He saw water and fruits all mixed up with garlands amid shattered jars and overturned vessels.

[26–32] And he saw that many of the women's beds were empty and that some of those beautiful women were embracing one another in their sleep. One young woman, overcome by the power of sleep, had taken off

another’s garment, and embracing her made love to her in her sleep. The lovely clothes and garlands that they wore stirred slightly from their breathing as if caught in a gentle breeze. A breeze was blowing there, bearing in all directions a varied fragrance of cool sandalwood paste and sweet-tasting rum, of various garlands and blossoms. Thus, a fragrant and overwhelming aroma of sandal for the bath and incense wafted through the Puṣpaka palace. Some of those beautiful women in the *rākṣasa*’s palace were dark and lovely, others were black, while others had limbs the color of gold. Overcome by the power of sleep and half-fainting after making love, they looked like sleeping lotuses.

[33–36] In this way, the enormously powerful monkey scoured the entire inner apartments of Rāvaṇa, leaving nothing out. But still he did not see Jānakī. But even as he was gazing upon those women, the great monkey was alarmed by a concern for propriety, and he fell prey to great anxiety: “My having cast my gaze upon the women of another man’s inner apartments while they slept will constitute a serious breach of propriety. Up until now I have never cast my eyes upon the women’s quarters of another. Nonetheless, here I have had to look upon the women of another man’s household.”

[37–42] But then that wise monkey, whose mind was focused on his sole objective, had a second thought, showing him clearly what he had to do: “It is true that I have observed all of Rāvaṇa’s women while they were unsuspecting, but even so, my mind was not in the least disturbed. In the end, it is the mind alone that stimulates all the senses to perform good or evil actions, and in this respect, my mind remains undisturbed. In any case, I could not have searched for Vaidehī anywhere else. When one is searching, one should always expect to find a woman where the women are kept. A creature is to be sought among those of its own kind; one cannot go searching for a lost woman among does! I have searched the entire inner apartment of Rāvaṇa with a pure mind, but still I have not found Jānakī.”

[43–44] Mighty Hanumān saw the daughters of the *devas*, the *gandharvas*, and the great serpents, but still he did not see Jānakī. After seeing those other exquisite women, but not her, the heroic monkey left that place and fell once more to brooding.

Sarga 10

[1–5] Anxious to find lovely Sītā, the monkey wandered within the palace grounds through creeper-covered bowers, picture galleries, and night chambers, but he could not find her. Unable to find the beloved of the delight of the Raghus, the great monkey lapsed once more into gloomy thought: “Since I cannot find Sītā Maithilī, even though I have searched for her, she must surely be dead. That mere child, who was determined to preserve her virtue and was firmly fixed in the noble path of *āryan* conduct, must have been killed by the lord of the *rākṣasas*, a creature of wicked deeds. Or the daughter of the lord of the Janakas may have died of terror when she saw the hideous, dark, and deformed women of the *rākṣasa* king with their huge mouths and their large and ugly eyes. After wasting so much time with the monkeys, there is no way that I can go back to Sugrīva without having found Sītā and accomplishing my mission. For he is a powerful monkey and wields a cruel rod of punishment.

[6–9] “I have searched the entire inner apartments and I have seen Rāvaṇa’s wives, yet I have not found virtuous Sītā. Indeed, all my effort has been in vain. What will all the monkeys say to me in their assembly when I return? ‘Tell us, O hero, what did you accomplish by going there?’ What will I say to them if I have not found the daughter of Janaka? Since we have exceeded the time limit, they will surely fast unto death. And what will elderly Jāmbavān, Añgada, and the assembled monkeys say to me when I reach the far shore of the ocean?

[10–15] “Fortitude is the root of success. Fortitude leads to the greatest happiness. Very well then, I shall renew my search in places where I have not yet searched. Fortitude always provides the impetus to all undertakings. It renders fruitful whatever undertaking it inspires in anyone. Therefore, I must make a supreme effort and carry it through with fortitude. I shall search all the places under Rāvaṇa’s protection that I have not yet seen. I have already searched the drinking hall and the halls of flowers; I have searched the picture galleries, and the game rooms, as well as the paths through the gardens and the great mansions.” Such were the reflections of Hanumān. Then, jumping up and jumping down, sometimes moving, sometimes standing motionless, he began once more to search the underground chambers, shrines, and penthouses.

[16–18] And so, opening doors and smashing door panels, going in and coming out, going up and going down, the great monkey went through

every room in the palace. There was not a single space in Rāvaṇa's inner apartments big enough even for four fingers into which the monkey did not go. He searched them all: passageways inside the ramparts, platforms around shrines, cellars, and lotus ponds.

[19–23] And there Hanumān saw *rākṣasa* women of all different appearances, hideous and deformed. But he did not see Janaka's daughter. Hanumān saw exquisite *vidyādhara* women, unparalleled in this world for beauty. But he did not see her who was the delight of Rāghava. And Hanumān saw daughters of the great serpents with beautiful hips and faces like the full moon. But he did not see there fair-waisted Sītā. And he saw daughters of the great serpents whom the lord of the *rākṣasas* had violently abducted through conquest. But he did not see the delight of Janaka. Seeing those other exquisite women, but not her, great-armed Hanumān, the son of Māruta, became deeply despondent.

[24–25] Reflecting that the efforts of the lords of the monkeys and his own leap over the ocean had been in vain, the son of Anila the wind god lapsed once more into gloomy thought. Then Hanumān, son of Māruta, descended from the flying palace. His mind stricken with grief, he lapsed once more into gloomy thought.

Sarga 11

[1–5] Leaping down from the flying palace to the ramparts, Hanumān, leader of the troops of tawny monkeys, moved as swiftly as does lightning across a cloud. When he had completely circled Rāvaṇa's dwelling and still had not seen Sītā Jānakī, the monkey Hanumān spoke these words: "I have turned Lañkā inside out again and again in my efforts to please Rāma, but I have not found Sītā Vaidehī, lovely in every limb. I have searched the entire land: ponds, tanks, lakes, streams, rivers, marshlands, woods, and inaccessible mountains—and still I have not found Jānakī. The king of the vultures, Saṃpāti, said that Sītā was in Rāvaṇa's house, but I cannot find her.

[6–10] "Can it be that Sītā Vaidehī—the lady of Mithilā and a daughter of Janaka—has given herself to evil Rāvaṇa in her helplessness? I think that Sītā may have fallen when the *rākṣasa*, having seized her, was swiftly flying up in his fear of Rāma's arrows. Or I think that when she saw the sea while being carried away through the sky—the path frequented by perfected

beings—the heart of that noble lady may have stopped. Or I think that perhaps that noble, wide-eyed lady may have lost her life due to the immense pressure of Rāvaṇa's thighs and the crushing grip of his arms. Or perhaps in struggling with him as he flew higher and higher over the ocean, the daughter of Janaka fell into the sea.

[11–15] "Or perhaps poor Sītā, cut off from her kin, was eaten by cruel Rāvaṇa as she attempted to defend her virtue. On the other hand, that innocent, black-eyed lady may have been devoured by the malicious wives of the lord of the *rākṣasas*. The poor thing must have died still thinking of Rāma's face, which is like the full moon, its eyes like lotus petals. And thus Vaidehī, the lady of Mithilā, must have given up her life, loudly lamenting, 'Alas, Rāma! Lakṣmaṇa! Alas, Ayodhyā!' Or I think she may be locked away somewhere in Rāvaṇa's palace, softly lamenting like a caged *sārikā* bird.

[16–20] "How could Rāma's fair-waisted wife, her eyes like lotus petals, a lady born in the House of Janaka, have come under the power of Rāvaṇa? It is impossible for me to report to Rāma, who is so fond of his wife, whether Janaka's daughter is invisible, hidden, or dead. It would be wrong for me to report what has happened and equally wrong not to do so. Now what am I supposed to do? It seems to me that I have come to an impasse. Since the situation has come to this, what would be the proper and timely thing to do?" Thus did Hanumān deliberate in his thoughts. "If I should return from here to the city of the monkey lord without having found Sītā, then what would I have accomplished?

[21–25] "My leaping over the ocean, my entering into Laṅkā, and my seeing the *rākṣasas* will have all been for nothing. And what will Sugrīva, the assembled tawny monkeys, and the two sons of Daśaratha say to me back in Kiṣkindhā? If I return to Kākutstha and tell him the most unwelcome news that I have not found Sītā, then he will surely die. For he will not survive hearing that unwelcome news concerning Sītā, so harsh, dreadful, cruel, painful, and tormenting to his senses. Seeing him in such a dreadful state—his thoughts fixed on death—wise Lakṣmaṇa, who is deeply devoted to him, will surely die as well.

[26–30] "And when Bharata hears that his brothers are dead, he too will die, and Śatrughna will not survive seeing Bharata dead. Then, without a doubt, their mothers, Kausalyā, Sumitrā, and Kaikeyī, learning that their

sons are dead, will likewise die. Upon seeing Rāma in such a state, the lord of the leaping monkeys, Sugrīva, filled with gratitude and having honorably formed a compact with him, will give up his life. Then poor Rumā—depressed, hysterical, dejected, and joyless—will give up her life, tormented by grief for her lord. And Tārā too—already drawn with grief and tormented by her grief for Vālin—will never survive the death of the king.

[31–36] "How then will Prince Aṅgada survive the death of both his mother and his father and the loss of Sugrīva as well? Then the forest-dwelling monkeys, overwhelmed by grief for their master, will beat their heads with their palms and fists. Those monkeys, so well treated by the glorious monkey king—conciliated, rewarded, and honored—will abandon their lives. Never again will those elephants among monkeys assemble to play in the forests, hills, and caves. Then, oppressed by the calamity that has befallen their master, they will assemble in the high hills with their sons, wives, and ministers and hurl themselves from the mountain peaks. All the monkeys will take their own lives by means of weapons, fasting, self-immolation, hanging, or poison.

[37–42] "I anticipate that when I get there, there will be dreadful wailing; for it will mean the destruction of the Ikṣvāku dynasty as well as of the forest-dwelling monkeys. Therefore, I shall not go from here to the city of Kiṣkindhā; for I dare not see Sugrīva without Maithilī. As long as I stay here and do not return, the two righteous chariot-warriors and the wise monkeys will live on in hope. If I cannot find the daughter of Janaka, I will become a forest hermit, living under a tree, restraining my senses, eating only what falls into my hands or my mouth. I will build a funeral pyre in some marshy country by the sea—rich in roots, fruits, and water—and there I shall enter the sacred fire, the son of the fire sticks. Or let the crows and wild beasts devour my body as I sit in meditation duly perfecting my soul.

[43–47] "I think that there is yet another mode of ending one's life that has been sanctioned by the seers. If I do not find Jānakī, I shall enter the water in the prescribed fashion. This long night that began so auspiciously, that was so lovely, so filled with the potential for fame and glory, has ended in disaster; for I have not found Sītā. I shall become an ascetic, restraining my senses under a tree. I shall not go back unless I find that black-eyed woman. For if I should return without having recovered Sītā, then Aṅgada

and all the rest of the monkeys will surely die. Many calamities will ensue in the event of my death. On the other hand, if a person remains alive, he will surely gain felicity. Therefore, I must remain alive. For if I do, then a successful outcome is assured."

[48–50] Thus did that elephant among monkeys reflect on his manifold sorrows over and over, but still he could not surmount his despair: "On the other hand, I could kill the powerful ten-necked Rāvaṇa. Granted, Sītā would still have been abducted, but at least we would have taken vengeance. Or I can hurl him high across the ocean and present him as a sacrificial offering to Rāma, as one might a sacrificial beast to Śiva, lord of beasts."

[51–57] Having failed to recover Sītā and lost in gloomy thought, the monkey—his mind overwhelmed with grief and brooding—brooded further: "I shall continue to search this city of Laṅkā over and over again until I find Rāma's illustrious wife, Sītā. For if I should bring Rāma Rāghava here on the strength of what Saṃpāti said and he should not find his wife, he would surely kill all the monkeys. So I will stay right here, eating barely enough to stay alive and controlling my senses, lest all those men and monkeys perish on my account. But there stands a large grove of huge *aśoka* trees. I shall go there, for I have not yet searched it. After first paying obeisance to the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ādityas, the Aśvins, and the Maruts, I shall go there to bring great sorrow upon the *rākṣasas*. And once I have conquered the *rākṣasas*, I shall bestow the queen, the delight of the Ikṣvāku dynasty, upon Rāma, just as supernatural power is bestowed upon an ascetic."

[58–60] Having brooded in this fashion, his senses overwhelmed with gloomy thought, great-armed Hanumān, son of Māruta, rose up and said: "Homage to Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and to the queen, the daughter of Janaka. Homage to Rudra, Indra, Yama, and Anila the wind god. Homage to the Moon, the Sun, and the hosts of Maruts." When he had offered his obeisance to these divinities and to Sugrīva, Māruti scanned all the directions to take the measure of the *aśoka* grove.

[61–65] Then, when he had mentally traversed the lovely *aśoka* grove, the monkey, the son of Māruta, pondered his next move, thinking: "Surely this *aśoka* grove, crowded with stands of trees, must be full of *rākṣasas*, for it is carefully tended with every kind of care. There must be guards posted

here to guard the trees; and even the wind—that holy divinity who pervades all things—is not blowing too violently. I have made myself very small for Rāma’s sake and to evade Rāvaṇa. So may the gods and hosts of seers grant me success. May holy, self-existent Brahmā and the gods—Agni, Vāyu, and Indra, invoked by many and wielder of the *vajra*—ordain success for me.

[66–69] “May Varuṇa, noose in hand, the Moon, the Sun, the great Aśvins, all the Maruts, all great beings, and the lord of beings, as well as other invisible beings who may govern my path, grant me success. Oh, when will I see that noble lady’s flawless face, which—with its prominent nose, white teeth, bright smile, and eyes like lotus petals—resembles the bright moon, the lord of the stars? How may I set my eyes today on that poor, frail woman, so violently assaulted by that cruel, despicable, and evil creature, whose beautifully adorned appearance belies his ruthlessness?”

Sarga 12

[1–4] The powerful monkey remained lost in thought for a moment. Then, having mentally traversed the *aśoka* grove, he bounded from Rāvaṇa’s mansion to its outer wall. Once on the wall, the great monkey, his whole body charged with excitement, saw various trees covered with blossoms at the advent of spring. There were *sālas*, *aśokas*, *bhavyas*, blossoming *campakas*, *uddālakas*, *nāgavṛkṣas*, mangoes, and *kapimukhas*. Then, like an iron arrow loosed from a bowstring, he leapt swiftly to a grove of trees that was surrounded by a stand of mangoes and covered with hundreds of creepers.

[5–10] The monkey Hanumān entered and gazed upon that lovely grove, which resounded with the songs of birds. That lovely grove was surrounded on every side by trees of silver and gold. It was made still more beautiful by flocks of birds and herds of deer. It had the splendor of the rising sun. It was filled with all sorts of trees just coming into fruit and flower and was the home of impassioned bees and *kokilas*. At that season—when people are filled with excitement and when birds and beasts are everywhere—it abounded with flocks of every sort of bird and was filled with the cries of impassioned peacocks. As he searched for that blameless, fair-hipped princess, the monkey startled birds that had been peacefully sleeping. And as the flocks of birds flew off, they struck the trees with their wings, letting loose showers of blossoms of every color.

[11–15] Covered with blossoms, Hanumān, son of Māruta, resembled a mountain of flowers there in the midst of the *aśoka* grove. And when the creatures there saw the monkey racing in all directions through the stands of trees, they all thought he was the spirit of springtime. Strewn with all the different kinds of blossoms that had fallen from the trees, the ground there was as lovely as a young woman all bejeweled. Violently shaken by the powerful monkey, the trees let fall their lovely blossoms. Their leaves shaken from their crowns, their fruits and flowers fallen, the trees resembled gamblers who have staked their clothes and jewelry and lost.

[16–20] Shaken by swift Hanumān, those splendid trees in glorious blossom shed their flowers, leaves, and fruits all at once. With nothing left but their trunks, abandoned by the flocks of birds, all the trees became as inhospitable as trees shattered by the wind. Crushed by the monkey's tail and fore and hind feet, the *aśoka* grove, its splendid trees smashed, resembled a young woman, her hair disheveled, her makeup smeared, her lovely teeth and lips bruised with kisses, and her body wounded by nails and teeth. The monkey violently tore through the lines of hanging creepers, as does the wind through the masses of clouds over the Vindhya mountains in the rainy season.

[21–26] As he roamed about, the monkey saw charming grounds paved with gemstones, silver, and gold. Here and there were pools of various shapes filled with the purest water with costly, jewel-inlaid stairways leading down to them. They had pearl and coral in place of sand, their bottoms were inlaid with crystal, and they were adorned with beautiful golden trees set along their banks. They had beds of red and blue lotuses in full bloom, and they resounded with the murmuring of *cakravāka* birds, the cries of *natyūhas*, and the calls of *haṃsas* and *sārasa* cranes. They were fed on every side by long, limpid streams with trees along their banks and water like nectar. And they were completely overhung with hundreds of creepers and surrounded by *santānaka* blossoms as well as provided with groves of various shrubs interspersed with *karavīra* trees.

[27–31] Then that tiger among monkeys saw a mountain—the most beautiful mountain in the world—with a huge peak. It looked like a cloud and had a beautiful peak with many lesser peaks around it. It was covered with stone buildings and full of various kinds of trees. The monkey saw a stream descending from that mountain, like a beloved woman who, having

arisen from her lover's lap, had thrown herself on the ground. It was adorned with trees that trailed their branches in its water so that it resembled an angry young woman restrained by close friends. And the great monkey watched that stream as its waters eddied back so that it now resembled a beloved woman who had returned to her lover, propitiated.

[32–35] A little way beyond that stream, the tiger among monkeys, Hanumān, son of the wind god, saw lotus ponds filled with flocks of various birds. He also saw an elongated artificial tank filled with cool water. The steps leading down to it were of fine gemstones, and it had pearls in place of sand. It was thronged with herds of various animals, and it had a lovely grove of trees. It was adorned on every side with artificial woodlands and with vast palaces fashioned by Viśvakarman. All the trees there were bursting into fruit and flower. They were surrounded with parasols, raised benches, and raised platforms of gold.

[36–39] There the great monkey spied a solitary golden *śiṃśapā* tree. It was covered with thick foliage and many climbing creepers, and it was surrounded by raised platforms of gold. He saw springs issuing forth from fissures in the earth and other golden trees the color of fire. In the reflected radiance of those trees, which was like that of Mount Meru, the great and heroic monkey thought, "I have been turned into gold!" Gazing upon that tree, which was waving gently in the breeze along with the stand of golden trees and which gave off the sound of hundreds of little bells, he was filled with wonder.

[40–42] Then the swift monkey climbed the beautiful blossoming *śiṃśapā* tree with its dense foliage and young sprouts and buds and thought: "From here I shall see Vaidehī, who is so desperately longing for the sight of Rāma. For wandering here and there, distracted with sorrow, she may by chance come this way. Surely this lovely *aśoka* grove, adorned with *campaka*, sandalwood, and *bakula* trees, must belong to that wicked *rākṣasa*.

[43–47] "And here too is this lovely lotus pond filled with flocks of birds; surely Jānakī, Rāma's queen, must come this way. Surely that beautiful woman Jānakī, Rāghava's beloved, Rāma's queen, who is accustomed to walking through the forest, will come this way. Moreover, that fawn-eyed woman must be familiar with this grove and so, drawn with brooding on Rāma, she must come to it. That lovely-eyed lady, pained with

her grief for Rāma, must always come here, for she loved living in the forest and used to wander in it. Then, too, the virtuous daughter of Janaka, Rāma's beloved wife, always used to love the creatures of the forest.

[48–51] "Surely Jānakī, that fair and lovely young woman, thinking ahead to the time of the *sandhyā* rituals, will come to this stream with its limpid waters to perform them. For this lovely *aśoka* grove is a fitting place for the lovely and cherished wife of Rāma, lord of kings. If indeed that lady, whose face is like the moon, the lord of stars, is still alive, then she will surely come to this stream with its limpid waters." And so, reflecting in this fashion, great Hanumān hid himself in that beautifully blossoming tree, dense with leaves, observing everything, watching, and waiting for the wife of the lord of men.

Sarga 13

[1–6] Perched in that tree, Hanumān gazed all around him searching for Maithilī. He looked down to the ground and surveyed the entire grove. With its trees and their clinging *santānaka* vines, it looked very beautiful. It was decorated everywhere and filled with heavenly essences and fragrances. It was full of animals and birds and resembled the heavenly Nandana garden. It was crowded with mansions and palaces. It was filled with the songs of birds and the cry of the *kokila* arching above them all. It was made beautiful by lotus ponds filled with red and blue lotuses fashioned of gold. It had many seats with costly coverings and numerous underground chambers. It had lovely trees full of fruit that blossomed all year round. With the splendor of its blossoming *aśoka* trees, it had the radiance of the sunrise. To Māruti, perching there, it looked as though it were ablaze. The branches of its trees looked as if they were being constantly stripped of their leaves by the hundreds of colorful birds, garlanded with flowers, that flew up from them.

[7–10] By virtue of its trees—*aśokas* that drive away sorrow, so dense with blossoms down to their roots that they seemed to touch the ground from their weight, and its blossoming *karṇikāras*, and fully blooming *kiṃśukas*—that spot seemed as if ablaze with radiance on every side. And all its many *puṃnāga*, *saptaparṇa*, *campaka*, and *uddālaka* trees with their large roots and beautiful blossoms appeared radiant as well. There were

thousands of *aśoka* trees there, some shining like gold, others resembling tongues of flame, still others glistening like blue-black collyrium.

[11–14] The grove was as variegated as Nandana, Indra's grove, and as lovely as Caitraratha, the grove of Kubera. Indeed, it seemed to surpass them both; for it was unimaginable, heavenly, lovely, and filled with radiance. It looked like a second sky with flowers for its host of stars. With blossoms for its hundreds of jewels, it seemed to be a fifth ocean. With its massed trees, honey scented and bearing flowers all year round, and with its birds and flocks of animals with their various cries, the grove was ravishing. With its many wafting fragrances, ravishing the heart with its sweet scents, it seemed to be a second Mount Gandhamādana, rich in fragrances.

[15–17] Not far off in the *aśoka* grove, the bull among monkeys spied a lofty domed palace. White as Mount Kailāsa, it stood surrounded by a thousand pillars. It had stairways worked in coral and railings of burnished gold. It seemed to steal away one's eyes, for it appeared to be ablaze with splendor. Pure white, it stood so tall it seemed to scrape the sky.

[18–24] Then he saw a woman clad in a soiled garment and surrounded by *rākṣasa* women. She was gaunt with fasting. She was dejected and she sighed repeatedly. She looked like the shining sliver of the waxing moon. Her radiance was lovely; but with her beauty now only faintly discernible, she resembled a flame of fire occluded by thick smoke. She was clad in a single, fine yellow garment, now much worn. Covered with dirt and lacking ornaments, she resembled a pond without lotuses. Ashamed, tormented by grief, disconsolate, and suffering, she looked like the constellation Rohiṇī occluded by the planet Mars. She was dejected, her face covered with tears. She was emaciated through fasting. She was depressed, given over to sorrow. Brooding constantly, she was consumed with her grief. No longer seeing the people dear to her but only the hosts of *rākṣasa* women, she was like a doe cut off from her herd and surrounded by a pack of hounds. She had a single braid—like a black serpent—falling down her back. Deserving only happiness and unaccustomed to calamity, she was consumed with sorrow.

[25–29] Closely examining that wide-eyed woman—so dirty and emaciated—he reasoned from these indicative signs: "She must be Sītā! This woman looks exactly like the one I saw earlier being carried off by that

rākṣasa, who can take on any form at will." Sītā's face was like the full moon; her eyebrows were beautiful; her breasts were lovely and full. With her radiance that lady banished the darkness from all directions. Her hair was jet black, her lips like *bimba* fruit. Her waist was lovely, and her posture was perfect. Her eyes were like lotus petals, and she looked like Rati, wife of Manmatha, god of love. That lovely woman—as cherished by all living things as the radiance of the full moon—was seated on the ground like an ascetic woman practicing austerity.

[30–36] Sighing constantly, that timorous woman resembled a daughter-in-law of a serpent lord. By virtue of the vast net of sorrow spread over her, her radiance was dimmed like that of a flame of fire obscured by a shroud of smoke. She was like a blurred memory or a fortune lost. She was like faith lost or hope dashed, like success undermined by catastrophe or intellect dulled. She was like a reputation lost through false rumors. She was distraught at being prevented from rejoining Rāma and anguished by her abduction by the *rākṣasa*. That delicate, fawn-eyed woman was looking about here and there. Her sorrowful face with its black-tipped eyelashes was covered with a flood of tears. She sighed again and again. Dejected, covered with dirt and grime, and devoid of ornaments—though she was worthy of them—she resembled the light of the moon, the king of stars, obscured by a black storm cloud. As he examined Sītā closely, Hanumān's mind was once more afflicted with uncertainty; for she seemed barely discernible, like some vedic text once learned by heart but now nearly lost through lack of recitation.

[37–38] It was only with great difficulty that Hanumān was able to recognize Sītā without her ornaments, just as one might make out the sense of a word whose meaning had been changed through want of proper usage. Still, after closely examining the wide-eyed, blameless princess, he concluded that this was indeed Sītā, confirming his judgment through the telltale signs.

[39–45] Then he noticed on Vaidehī's body—beautifying her limbs—the mass of jewelry that Rāma had described: "Though blackened with long use, her beautifully formed earrings, her finely crafted 'dog's teeth,' and the handsome jewelry on her hands, variegated with gemstones and coral, are all in their proper places. I think they must be the very ones that Rāma described. I do not see the ones that fell back there, but those that have not

fallen off are undoubtedly the very ones described by Rāma. Then, caught in a tree, where she had let it fall, the leaping monkeys spied her splendid, yellow upper garment. It looked like a sheet of gold. On the ground they also found the large, jingling pieces of fine jewelry that she had thrown down. Although this garment of hers is exceedingly worn from long use, still, surely, it is the same splendid color as the other.

[46–52] "This must be Rāma's beloved golden-hued queen, who, though she is lost to him, has not departed from his heart. This must be she on whose account Rāma has suffered fourfold misery: because of his compassion, because of his kindness, because of his grief, because of his love. His compassion has been aroused by the thought that a woman has been lost, his kindness by the thought that a supplicant has perished, his grief because his wife is gone, and his love because his beloved has been taken from him. The beauty of this black-eyed lady and the perfection of her every limb are just like Rāma's. She must therefore belong to him. This lady's thoughts are firmly fixed on him and his on her. It is for this reason alone that she and that righteous man have been able to survive even for a moment. Great-armed Rāma has accomplished the impossible in managing to survive even for a moment without this intoxicating lady, Sītā." Having discovered Sītā in this fashion, the son of Pavana, the wind god, in great delight, fixed his thoughts on Lord Rāma and praised him.

Sarga 14

[1–5] When the bull among tawny monkeys had praised praiseworthy Sītā and Rāma, so delightful for his many virtues, he lapsed once more into gloomy thought. After a moment's brooding, powerful Hanumān lamented for Sītā, his eyes brimming with tears: "Sītā is so deeply cherished by Lakṣmaṇa's elder brother, and he was so well trained by his *gurus*. If even she can suffer such misery, then truly the power of time is inescapable. But this lady knows the firm resolve of Rāma and wise Lakṣmaṇa, and so she is no more excessively agitated than is the river Ganges at the onset of the rainy season. Rāghava is a fit mate for Vaidehī, for they are matched in character, age, and conduct as well as in birth and auspicious marks. And that black-eyed lady is likewise a fit mate for him."

[6–10] Gazing at her, who was young and golden and as beloved by all people as Śrī, the goddess of fortune, his thoughts went back to Rāma, and

he said these words: “It was for the sake of this wide-eyed lady that mighty Vālin was struck down and Kabandha, Rāvaṇa’s equal in might, was slain. And it was for her sake that Virādha, that *rākṣasa* of fearsome valor, was attacked and killed in battle by Rāma in the forest, just as was Śambara by great Indra. It was for her sake as well that fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* of dreadful deeds were slaughtered in Janasthāna with arrows like tongues of flame. It was for her sake that Khara was killed in battle, Triśiras was slain, and mighty Dūṣaṇa destroyed by celebrated Rāma.

[11–14] “The lordship of the monkeys, so difficult to obtain and so highly esteemed throughout the world, had been in the keeping of Vālin. It was because of her that Sugrīva acquired it. And it was also for the sake of this wide-eyed lady that I leapt across the majestic ocean, lord of rivers and streams, and searched this city. If Rāma were to turn all the land stretching to the sea upside down for her sake, or even the universe itself, it would, in my opinion, be well justified. If one had to decide the relative worth of the kingship over the three worlds on the one hand and Janaka’s daughter on the other, the undivided kingship of the three worlds would not be worth one-sixteenth of Sītā.

[15–20] “For she is Sītā, daughter of the great and righteous King Janaka Maithila, unwavering in her devotion to her lord. Splitting open the earth, she arose from the land as it was cut by the ploughshare. She was covered with the auspicious soil of the field—resembling lotus pollen. She is the illustrious eldest daughter-in-law of King Daśaratha, who was valorous and noble and never retreated in battle. She is the beloved wife of the skillful and celebrated Rāma, who knows what is right. But she has now fallen into the hands of the *rākṣasa* women. Abjuring all pleasures, driven only by the power of her love for her husband, she entered the desolate wilderness with no care for its hardships. Satisfied with a diet of fruits and roots, devoted to her husband’s service, she experiences the greatest delight whether in the wilderness or in a palace.

[21–26] “Her body is of a golden hue, and she always spoke with a smile. Yet she who had never suffered misfortune now must endure this torment. Rāghava is yearning to see that virtuous lady who has been tormented by Rāvaṇa, as a thirsty man yearns to find a well. Once he recovers her, Rāghava will surely be as delighted as a king who regains his lost kingdom. Deprived of all pleasures and cut off from her family, she

manages to survive only in the expectation of being reunited with him. She does not even notice these *rākṣasa* women, nor these trees full of fruits and blossoms. For her heart is fixed on just one thing, and she can see only Rāma. Truly a husband is a woman's finest ornament, surpassing all others. For without him, this lady, though made for beauty, is not beautiful.

[27–32] "Lord Rāma is accomplishing a difficult feat in that he manages to sustain his life and has not died of grief through being deprived of her. Seeing this lady with her black locks and eyes like hundred-petaled lotuses, who is deserving of pleasure but stricken with pain, even my heart is deeply pained. Enduring as the earth, the lotus-eyed woman, who was once guarded by Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa, is now guarded under a tree by *rākṣasa* women with hideous eyes. Stripped of her beauty like a lotus pond smitten by frost, oppressed by one calamity after another, the daughter of Janaka has been reduced to a pitiable state, like a female *cakravāka* bird separated from her mate. These *aśoka* trees, their branches bent down under the weight of their blossoms, only intensify her sorrow, and so does the thousand-rayed moon with its gentle beams, now rising at the onset of spring." Reflecting in this way on the matter, the monkey came to the firm conclusion that it was indeed Sītā. But having taken refuge in that tree, the swift and mighty bull among tawny monkeys remained there.

Sarga 15

[1–3] Then the bright moon, resembling a mass of white lotuses, rose into the clear sky, like a *haṃsa* plunging into blue water. With its cool rays, the bright moon refreshed the son of Pavana the wind god, while with its radiance, it seemed as if to serve as his assistant. Then he saw Sītā, whose face was like the full moon. She was weighed down by her burden of grief, like a ship at sea by heavy cargo.

[4–8] Straining to see Vaidehī, Hanumān, son of Māruta, saw—a short distance away—frightful-looking *rākṣasa* women. One had but one eye. One had but a single ear, while another's ears covered her entire upper body. One had no ears at all. Another had pointed ears, while yet another had her nose on her forehead. One had a huge head; another's neck was long and thin. One had hardly any hair, while another was completely bald. Yet another's hair covered her like a woolen blanket. One had pendulous ears and a bulbous forehead; another's breasts and belly hung down. One's

lips protruded, while another's lips were on her chin. Yet another's mouth hung open, while still another's knees stuck out. One was very short, another very tall. One was hunchbacked, another was deformed, while yet another was a dwarf. One was snaggletoothed; another had a sunken face. One had yellow eyes, while another's features were distorted.

[9–17] The best of monkeys stared at those *rākṣasa* women, whose appearance caused his fur to bristle. They were deformed, yellowish, black, wrathful, fond of quarrels, and armed with lances, mallets, and war hammers of black iron. Some had the faces of boars, deer, tigers, buffalo, goats, or jackals. Some had feet like those of elephants, camels, and horses. Others' heads were sunk into their bodies. Some had only one hand, others one foot. Some had the ears of donkeys, horses, cows, elephants, or monkeys. Some had no noses; others had huge ones. Some had crooked noses or noses without nostrils. Some had noses like elephants' trunks, while others had nostrils in their foreheads. Some had the feet of elephants, some had enormous feet, some had feet like cows' hooves, and some had hairy feet. Some had enormous heads, necks, breasts, and bellies. Some had enormous mouths and eyes, while others had long tongues and nails. Some of those dreadful-looking *rākṣasa* women had the faces of goats, elephants, cows, sows, horses, camels, or donkeys. They held lances and war hammers; and they were wrathful and fond of quarrels. Those *rākṣasa* women were snaggletoothed. Their hair was like smoke, and their faces were hideous. Addicted to meat and wine, they were constantly guzzling strong drink. Their bodies were smeared with flesh and blood, for such was their food.

[18–23] They were seated all around the mighty trunk of that massive tree. Beneath it fortunate Hanumān observed that lady, Janaka's daughter, the blameless princess. She was lusterless and wracked with sorrow; her hair was matted with dirt. She resembled a star fallen from the heavens and crashed to earth, its merit exhausted. Although she was richly endowed with a fine reputation because of her virtuous character, she had become impoverished through the loss of her husband's company. Deprived of her splendid ornaments, she was adorned only by her love for her husband. She was imprisoned by the lord of the *rākṣasas* and separated from her kin. She was like an elephant cow captured by a lion and cut off from her herd. She resembled a sliver of the moon obscured by autumnal clouds at the end of

the rains. From want of her husband's touch, she had been reduced to a wretched state, like a lute that no one plays. She, Sītā, was devoted to the welfare of her husband, but unjustly held in the power of the *rākṣasas*.

[24–29] Hanumān gazed on that lady, who was drowning in a sea of sorrow there in the midst of the *aśoka* grove. Surrounded by those *rākṣasa* women, like the planet Rohiṇī occluded by malignant planets, she resembled a creeper stripped of its blossoms. Her body was covered with dirt, yet she was adorned with her own physical beauty, and so—like a tender lotus stalk covered with mud—she both lacked beauty and possessed it. The monkey Hanumān gazed upon the lovely fawn-eyed lady clad in a worn and soiled garment. But, though her face was despondent, the black-eyed lady Sītā was both confident in the might of her husband and protected by her own virtuous conduct. Hanumān watched fawn-eyed Sītā as she glanced around in all directions like a frightened fawn. She seemed almost to be scorching the sprouting trees with her sighs. She seemed to be a solid mass of sorrow or a wave risen from the ocean of grief.

[30–32] Gazing upon Maithilī, who was emaciated yet perfect in every limb and who was lovely even without her ornaments, Māruti experienced unparalleled joy. Gazing upon that woman of intoxicating eyes, Hanumān shed tears of joy and made obeisance to Rāghava. But the mighty monkey, having paid his obeisance to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, remained in hiding, delighted at having found Sītā.

Sarga 16

[1–5] While Hanumān had been exploring the grove with its flowering trees in his search for Vaidehī, the night had drawn nearly to a close. At daybreak, he heard the sound of vedic recitation by *rākṣasa* brahmans, who knew the *vedas* and their six subsidiary sciences. This was precisely the time when great-armed and mighty ten-necked Rāvaṇa would wake to the sounds struck from auspicious musical instruments, charming to the ear. Awakening at his usual time, the mighty lord of the *rākṣasas*, his garlands and clothes disheveled, immediately thought longingly of Vaidehī. Wholly obsessed with her and intoxicated with desire, the *rākṣasa* was unable to contain his passion.

[6–9] Adorned with every sort of jewelry and possessed of an unsurpassed majesty, he headed for the *aśoka* grove, gazing about him at

the pathways with their jeweled and golden arches. The grove was filled with various trees bursting with every sort of fruit and flower; it was dotted with lotus pools and adorned with various flowers. It was wonderful, made beautiful by constantly impassioned birds. And it was filled with various kinds of artificial animals, beautiful to behold. It was densely wooded, filled with herds of all sorts of animals, and strewn with fallen fruit.

[10–15] A hundred beautiful women accompanied Paulastya as he walked along, just as the women of the gods and *gandharvas* follow great Indra. Some of the women held golden lamps; others held yak-tail fly whisks or palmyra fronds. Some went before, bearing water in golden pitchers; while some walked behind, carrying curved swords. One skilled and lovely woman held a jeweled vessel full of drink in her right hand. Yet another walked behind him holding an umbrella with a golden shaft. It shone like the full moon and looked like a *rājahaṃsa*. Rāvaṇa's exquisite women, their eyes still blurred from sleep and drink, accompanied their mighty lord, as streaks of lightning do a thundercloud.

[16–23] The monkey, son of Māruta, first heard the sound of the belt ornaments and anklets belonging to those exquisite women. Then the monkey Hanumān spied Rāvaṇa—unparalleled in his deeds and inconceivable in his strength and valor—who had just reached the gateway. He was illuminated on all sides by many lamps filled with fragrant oil and held in front of him. In his desire, arrogance, and passion, and with his large eyes reddened and leering, he seemed like Kandarpa, the god of love incarnate, who had cast aside his bow. He was playfully trailing his splendid upper garment—spotless like the foam of freshly churned milk—for it had slipped from its place and snagged in his armlet. Concealed on his leafy branch, covered by a mass of leaves and blossoms, Hanumān was able to observe Rāvaṇa closely as he approached. Then the elephant among monkeys gazed around him and saw Rāvaṇa's exquisite women, who were so young and beautiful. Surrounded by those extremely beautiful women, the glorious king at last entered the women's grove, which resounded with the cries of beasts and birds.

[24–28] The mighty son of Viśravas, overlord of the *rākṣasas*, with his tapering ears and various kinds of jewelry, was intoxicated. The monkey watched him. Great and powerful, the monkey gazed upon that very powerful *rākṣasa*, who, surrounded by those splendid women, resembled

the moon surrounded by stars. The monkey thought, “This must be great-armed Rāvaṇa!” Then Hanumān, that mighty son of Māruta, crept lower. Although Hanumān was himself endowed with fierce power, he was so shaken by Rāvaṇa’s power that he clung there in a hidden place covered with leaves. But as for Rāvaṇa, in his urgent desire to see that fair-hipped woman with her black hair, her full breasts crowding one another, and her dark, darting eyes, he advanced toward her.

Sarga 17

[1–3] At that very moment, the young, beautiful, fair-waisted Princess Vaidehī—blameless in every way—caught sight of Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, who was adorned with the finest jewelry. She began to tremble like a banana plant in a gale. Covering her stomach with her thighs and her breasts with her arms, the beautiful wide-eyed woman sat there weeping.

[4–8] As ten-necked Rāvaṇa gazed upon Vaidehī—dejected, guarded by hosts of *rākṣasa* women, and overcome by misery—she appeared to him like a ship foundering in the ocean. She, whose ascetic vows were very severe, rested on the bare earth, like the severed limb of some great forest tree that had fallen to the ground. She, who was worthy of the finest ornaments, was unadorned save for the dirt, which took the place of ornaments on her soiled body. She looked as though she were speeding to the side of Rāma, that celebrated lion among kings, with wishes for her chariot and resolve for her horses. Alone, weeping, and wasting away, given over to brooding and grief, the lovely woman—so utterly devoted to Rāma—could see no end to her misery. Swaying from side to side like the wife of a serpent lord transfixed by a spell, she looked like the constellation Rohiṇī occluded by the malign planet Dhūmaketu.

[9–13] She was like a woman born into a righteous and virtuous traditional family who had, through marriage, become part of a bad one. She was like a fine reputation destroyed, like trust betrayed, like wisdom decayed, and like hope shattered. She was like one’s future destroyed, like a command disobeyed, like the skies aflame at a time of catastrophe, and like divine worship improperly performed. She resembled a ruined lotus pond or an army whose heroes have been slain; she was like a light shrouded in darkness or a river run dry. She was like a sacrificial altar defiled, a flame

extinguished; she was like a full-moon night on which the orb of the moon has been eclipsed by Rāhu.

[14–17] She was like a lotus pond fouled by the trunks of elephants, its lotus blossoms and leaves torn up, its sky-going birds frightened away. Anguished with grief for her husband, she was emaciated, like a riverbed whose waters have been diverted. Without her usual scrupulous cleanliness, she was like a night of the waning moon. She was delicate and splendid in every limb, and she was fit to dwell in mansions lined with jewels. Instead, she was like a newly plucked lotus stalk, withering in the heat. She was like an elephant lord's captured mate who, bound fast to a post and cut off from that leader of the herd, heaves deep sighs in her profound misery.

[18–21] Although she took no care of her long, single braid, it made her look as lovely as the earth with a line of dark forest at the end of the rains. She was exhausted from fasting and emaciated with grief; she was dejected with brooding and fear. She ate almost nothing and was rich only in austerities. With her hands cupped in reverence, anguished by her sorrow, it seemed as if she were supplicating some divinity with all her heart for the defeat of ten-necked Rāvaṇa at the hands of the foremost of the Raghus. Such was the condition of blameless Maithilī, who wept, looking all around her with her red-rimmed, wide, and bright eyes with their lovely lashes. Then Rāvaṇa—to his own undoing—tried to seduce her, though she was completely devoted to Rāma.

Sarga 18

[1–5] Then, with honeyed words fraught with meaning, Rāvaṇa revealed his intentions to that dejected woman as she sat there surrounded, joyless and suffering: "On seeing me, lady with thighs like elephants' trunks, you cover your breasts and stomach as if in your fear you wished to make yourself invisible. I long for you, wide-eyed lady. Dear lady, you are endowed with every bodily perfection. Stealer of all men's hearts, please look upon me with favor. There are no men here, nor are there other *rākṣasas*, who can change their form at will. So banish your fear of me, Sītā. For, timorous woman, making love to other men's wives and even carrying them off by force is perfectly appropriate behavior for *rākṣasas*. Let there be no doubt about this.

[6–10] “Nevertheless, Maithilī, I will never touch you unless you desire it, though Kāma, the god of love, may rage through my body to his heart’s content. You must trust me, dear lady. You need have no fear on this account. Give me your true love. You must not become prey to sorrow like this. This single braid, your sleeping on the ground, your brooding, your soiled garments, and your fasting at the wrong time: such things do not become you at all. Lovely floral garlands, sandalwood, and aloe; various garments, heavenly jewelry, costly drink, carriages, and beds; singing, dancing, and music—accept me, Maithilī, and you shall have it all.

[11–15] “For you are a jewel among women. You must not keep on like this. You should place jewelry on your limbs. Since you have won me, lovely lady, how could you be undeserving of such things? The lovely bloom of your youth is fading, and—like the swift current of a river—once gone, it will never return. I think that the creator of all things, the author of all beauty, must have left off his work after fashioning you. For, beautiful woman, there is no other woman to equal you in loveliness. What man, Vaidehī—even Grandfather Brahmā himself—could give you up having once laid eyes on you and your extraordinary youth and beauty? Your face is like the cool-rayed moon, and whichever of your limbs I see captivates my gaze, broad-hipped lady.

[16–20] “You must be my wife, Maithilī! Abandon this folly! You will be the chief queen over all my many magnificent women. All the choice things I have taken by force from all the worlds will be yours, timid lady, as will my kingdom and myself. I shall conquer the entire earth with its garland of different cities and present it to Janaka for your sake, lovely lady. I know of no other in this world who can rival me in strength. Just look at my immense power, irresistible in battle. Many times have I smashed the gods and *asuras* in battle and ground their battle standards into the dust. They can no longer stand in hostile ranks before me.

[21–27] “You must desire me. You should, this very moment, put on splendid jewelry. You must put dazzling jewels upon your limbs and let me behold your natural beauty, fully and properly adorned. Properly adorned and filled with kindness, lovely lady, you should enjoy all pleasures to your heart’s content. You must drink, timorous woman, and enjoy yourself. Give as many presents as you like; give away my wealth, even the earth itself. Enjoy yourself fully, trusting in me. Order me about impudently. Since you

will be enjoying yourself through my power, your kinfolk will enjoy themselves as well. Consider my wealth, fortunate lady, my magnificence, and my fame. Of what use to you, my lovely, is this Rāma with his barkcloth robes? Rāma has renounced the triumph of a warrior and has lost his royal splendor to become an ascetic, a wanderer in the forest, who sleeps on the bare ground. Indeed, I doubt that he is still alive. Nor will Rāma ever get even a glimpse of you, Vaidehī, any more than he could of moonlight occluded by the dense, black storm clouds that the *balāka* cranes herald. Unlike Hiraṇyakaśipu, who brought his wife back from Indra's clutches, Rāma will never be able to get you back from mine.

[28–31] "Beautiful lady, your smile, teeth, and eyes are lovely. You carry away my heart, as Suparṇa would a serpent. Since first I set my eyes on you, I have taken no pleasure in my own wives, even though you are emaciated, stripped of ornaments, and clad in a garment of tattered silk. No matter how many women—replete with every virtue—I may have in my inner apartments, Jānakī, you will rule over them all. All my women—the finest in all the three worlds—will wait upon you, lady of the raven tresses, as do the *apsarases* upon Śrī, the goddess of good fortune.

[32–35] "Whatever wealth and choice things were once Vaiśravaṇa's, you will now enjoy to your heart's content, woman of lovely brows and hips, as well as all the worlds and me. Rāma cannot compare to me, my lady, in ascetic power, physical strength, valor, wealth, power, or fame. So drink, enjoy yourself, amuse yourself, take pleasure in all pleasurable things. I shall bestow heaps of wealth and even the earth itself upon you. Delight in me, delightful one, to your heart's content, and let your kinfolk join you here and delight themselves as well. In seaside forest groves—canopied with stands of flowering trees and swarming with bees—you will enjoy yourself with me, timid lady, your body ornamented with bright necklaces of gold."

Sarga 19

[1–4] Afflicted and dejected, Sītā listened to those words of the dreadful *rākṣasa*. Then, sorrowfully, she replied in a soft and sorrowful voice. Weeping, trembling, and afflicted with sorrow, poor lovely Sītā, lady of the sweet smile—mourning for her husband and utterly devoted to him—placed a straw between Rāvaṇa and herself and said: "Turn your thoughts away

from me and fix them on your own wives. You are no more worthy of having me than is a sinner of acquiring spiritual perfection. And how could a woman like me, devoted to one husband, born into a noble family, and married into a meritorious one, do something so contemptible and forbidden?”

[5–9ab–498*–9cd–499*] Having spoken to the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa in this fashion, illustrious Vaidehī turned her back on him and continued with the following words: “As the virtuous wife of another man, I am not a suitable wife for you. You should properly consider what is right, and you should properly follow the conduct of the virtuous. You ought to protect the wives of other men, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, just as you do your own. Make an example out of yourself and make love to your own wives. Other men’s wives bring ruin upon a man—promiscuous, evil-minded, his senses unrestrained—unsatisfied with his own. [g]Whether there be virtuous men in this country or not, it is clear that you do not heed them, for your mind is perverse and utterly averse to proper conduct. [h]Your mind given to delusion, you do not heed the beneficial words that wise men utter; and this will lead to the destruction of the *rākṣasas*.

[10–13] “Even prosperous cities and countries can be brought to ruin if their monarch’s mind is uncontrolled and he is addicted to vicious conduct. With you for its ruler, the city of Laṅkā, filled with heaps of precious things, will soon be destroyed in just this fashion, solely because of your misconduct. Indeed, all creatures rejoice in the downfall of a shortsighted evildoer brought down by his own doing, Rāvaṇa. And all the people you have oppressed will, in their delight, say this about you, you evil wretch, ‘Thank god that brutal tyrant has met with destruction.’

[14–17] “You cannot seduce me with your power or your wealth, for I am as inseparable from Rāghava as is its radiance from the sun, bringer of light. Having once laid my head on the venerable arm of the lord of the world, how could I rest it on the arm of any other? I am the proper consort for that lord of the earth alone, just as is sacred learning for a learned brahman who has bathed in preparation for a religious observance. Very well then, Rāvaṇa, please reunite me, in my distress, with Rāma, as one might a young elephant cow with the lord of the elephants in the forest.

[18–24] “If you desire to retain your station, and if you wish to avoid a terrible death, it would be appropriate for you to make a friend of Rāma,

that bull among men. Indra's *vajra*, when hurled, might miss you, and Yama, the ender of all things, himself might long spare you. But once angered, Rāghava, lord of the world, will never spare the likes of you. You will hear the deafening sound of Rāma's bow, loud as the thunderbolt loosed by Indra of the hundred sacrifices. Swift, well-jointed arrows, their tips blazing like serpents' mouths, will soon be falling here, marked with the names of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Those heron-feathered arrows will soon be falling everywhere in the city, slaughtering the *rākṣasas* and bringing life to a halt. Then that great Garuḍa Vainateya in the form of Rāma will swiftly annihilate those great serpents in the form of the *rākṣasa* lords, just as Vainateya himself annihilates real serpents. That subduer of his foes, my husband, will quickly take me back from you, just as Viṣṇu took back the glorious royal sovereignty from the *asuras* with his three strides.

[25–30] "When your army of *rākṣasas* had been destroyed in Janasthāna, land of the dead, you, in your impotence, O *rākṣasa*, did this wicked thing. Vile creature, you entered that desolate ashram only when those two brothers, lions among men, had gone out to the forest; and you carried me off. If you had caught so much as a whiff of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, you would not have been able to stand your ground in their sight any more than a dog at the sight of a pair of tigers. If you were really to face the two of them in combat, it would be impossible for you to defeat them both. It would be like the defeat of one-armed Vṛtra by the two arms of Indra. My lord Rāma and Saumitri will draw out your life's breath with their arrows as quickly as the sun does a drop of water. Whether you flee to Kubera's mountain abode or the assembly hall of King Varuṇa, there is no way that you can escape Dāśarathi any more than a mighty tree—doomed to destruction—can escape the lightning bolt."

Sarga 20

[1–6] When the lord of the *rākṣasas* heard Sītā's harsh words, he responded to her—so pleasant to behold—in a most unpleasant manner: "However a man tries to conciliate women, he ends up being humiliated. The more I speak sweetly to you, the more I am rejected. Nonetheless, the desire for you that has arisen in me reins in my anger, as a skilled charioteer reins in his speeding horses on the road. Truly, desire is one of man's perversities; for it gives rise to compassion and affection in whomever it is aroused. That

is the only reason I do not kill you, my pretty one, even though you deserve death and dishonor and remain devoted to that false ascetic. A gruesome death would be fitting for you, Maithilī, for each of the harsh things you have said to me."

[7–9] When he had spoken these words to Sītā Vaidehī, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, addressed her further in a fresh paroxysm of rage: "I will honor the two-month period that I set as your deadline. But after that, my pretty, you must come to my bed. Once the two months have passed, if you still do not want me for your husband, then they will slaughter you in the kitchen for my breakfast."

[10–11] Now, when those wide-eyed daughters of the gods and *gandharvas* saw Jānakī being threatened by the lord of the *rākṣasas*, they became distressed. They tried to encourage Sītā, who was menaced by that *rākṣasa*, some with movements of their lips, others with gestures of their eyes and faces.

[12–17] Encouraged by the women, Sītā replied to the lord of the *rākṣasas* in words that were for his benefit and that expressed her pride in the power of her virtue: "Evidently there is no one here who takes an interest in what is good for you—someone who would restrain you from this contemptible behavior. What other man in all the three worlds would so much as think of attempting to woo me? For I am as inseparably the wife of that righteous man as Śacī is the wife of Indra, Śacī's lord. Now that you have spoken in so vile a fashion to the wife of immeasurably powerful Rāma, where can you flee to escape him, you despicable *rākṣasa*? It would be as if a proud bull elephant and a rabbit were to meet in the forest. Rāma is like that great elephant and you, wretch, are the rabbit. You are not ashamed to insult the lord of the Ikṣvākus just so long as you keep out of his sight.

[18–22] "And why is it, ignoble wretch, that these cruel and hideous eyes of yours—all yellow and black—do not fall to the ground as you ogle me? And how is it, villain, that your tongue does not shrivel as you speak to me, the wife of a righteous man and the daughter-in-law of Daśaratha? It is only because I have not been so ordered by Rāma and because I wish to preserve intact the power of my austerities that I do not reduce you to ashes with my own blazing power, for that is what you deserve. It is impossible for me to be taken away from wise Rāma. Doubtless all of this was

ordained by destiny to bring about your doom. How could you, a warrior with all your armies and the brother of Kubera the bestower of wealth, have stooped to luring Rāma away and stealing his wife?"

[23–27] When Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, heard those words of Sītā Jānakī, he rolled his cruel eyes in rage and glared at her. With his great arms and huge neck, he looked like a black storm cloud. He had the strength and the gait of a lion; he was majestic. His tongue was like a flame, and his eyes were fierce. He was tall, and the tip of his crown quivered; he wore brightly colored garlands and ointments. His clothes and floral wreaths were red, and his armlets and jewelry were of burnished gold. With his dark blue waistband wrapped about him, he looked like Mount Mandara with the great serpent wrapped around it to produce the nectar of immortality. Adorned with earrings that resembled the newly risen sun, he looked like a mountain with two *aśoka* trees, their sprouts and blossoms red.

[28–30] Glaring at Sītā Vaidehī with eyes red with rage, Rāvaṇa addressed her once again, hissing like a serpent: "So, you are devoted to that miserable pauper! I shall destroy you this very minute, as the sun with his radiance dispels the twilight of dawn." When he had finished speaking to Maithilī in this fashion, King Rāvaṇa, who makes his foes cry out, gave orders to all his dreadful-looking *rākṣasa* women.

[31–33] One of the *rākṣasa* women had a single eye, another but a single ear, while another's ears covered her upper body. One had the ears of a cow, another those of an elephant. One had long hanging ears, another no ears at all. One had the feet of an elephant, another those of a horse; a third had cow's feet, while another had hairy feet. One had but a single eye, another but a single foot. One had enormous feet, and still another had no feet at all. One had an enormous head and neck, and another enormous breasts and belly. One had an enormous mouth and eyes; one had a long tongue, while another had no tongue at all. One had no nose. One had the face of a lion, another a cow's face, while yet another had the face of a sow.

[34–36] He said to them, "All you *rākṣasa* women must get together at once and act so as to make Sītā Jānakī immediately compliant to my wishes. You must bring Vaidehī around, using any means you can: harsh or gentle tactics, conciliation, gifts, provoking a rift, or even violence." After repeatedly instructing them in this fashion, the lord of the *rākṣasas* continued to menace Jānakī, his mind overcome by lust and wrath.

[37–41] But then, suddenly, the *rākṣasa* woman Dhānyamālinī approached ten-necked Rāvaṇa and, embracing him, said these words: "Come play with me, your majesty. What do you want with this Sītā? The body of a man who desires a woman who does not want him suffers torments, but he who desires a responsive woman experiences enormous delight." Addressed in this fashion by the *rākṣasa* woman, mighty Rāvaṇa was diverted and went back into the palace, which shone with the splendor of the blazing sun, bringer of light. Then those daughters of the gods, *gandharvas*, and great serpents—who formed the retinue of ten-necked Rāvaṇa—reentered his magnificent palace. Thus, having menaced Sītā Maithilī, who, though trembling, stood firm in her devotion to righteousness, Rāvaṇa, infatuated by the god of love, left her and returned to his splendid residence.

Sarga 21

[1–4] When King Rāvaṇa, who makes his foes cry out, had spoken to Maithilī in this fashion and had given his orders to all the *rākṣasa* women, he left. No sooner had the lord of the *rākṣasas* departed and returned to his inner apartments than the horrible-looking *rākṣasa* women swarmed about Sītā. Crowding in upon Sītā Vaidehī, the *rākṣasa* women, beside themselves with fury, addressed her with these exceedingly harsh words: "Sītā, you don't seem to think very much of the idea of being the wife of the great and outstanding ten-necked Rāvaṇa Paulastya."

[5–8] Then, addressing Sītā, whose stomach was as flat as the palm of one's hand, a *rākṣasa* woman called Ekajaṭā spoke these words, her eyes red with rage: "The fourth of the six Prajāpatis was the mind-born son of Brahmā Prajāpati, lord of creatures, well known as Pulastya. Pulastya's mighty mind-born son was the great seer called Viśravas, who was Prajāpati's equal in splendor. Rāvaṇa, who makes his foes cry out, is his son. Lovely in every limb, you really ought to be the wife of that lord of the *rākṣasas*, wide-eyed woman. Why do you not accept the advice that I have been giving you?"

[9–14] Then a *rākṣasa* woman named Harijaṭā, rolling her eyes, which were like those of a cat, in her anger said these words: "You really should become the wife of the lord of the *rākṣasas* by whom even Indra, the king of the gods, and the thirty-three gods have been vanquished. How is it that

you will not consent to be the wife of that mighty and powerful hero, who is proud of his strength and who never retreats in battle? Forsaking his beloved wife, deeply cherished and most fortunate of all his women, mighty King Rāvaṇa will make love with you alone. And abandoning his inner apartments—adorned with every sort of jewel and filled with a thousand women—Rāvaṇa will make love with you alone. He who has come to you in this way is the one who has often defeated the gods, great serpents, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* in battle.

[15–19] "How then, vile creature, can you not desire to be the wife of great Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, so richly endowed in every way? How is it, lady of the long eyes, that you do not yield to him in fear of whom the sun does not shine and the wind does not blow? In fear of him, fair-browed woman, the trees loose showers of blossoms, and the mountains and clouds release their waters according to his whim. Why is it, lovely one, that you do not set your heart on becoming the wife of Rāvaṇa, king of the *rākṣasas*, king of kings? We have spoken to you truthfully and properly, charming lady. You should accept what we have said, woman of the lovely smile; otherwise you shall die!"

Sarga 22

[1–4] The harsh *rākṣasa* women with their hideous faces approached Sītā and harshly spoke these unpleasant words to her: "How is it, Sītā, that you do not wish to live in his inner apartments? They are furnished with costly beds, and they ravish the hearts of all creatures. As a human female, you set great store in being the wife of a human. But you must turn your thoughts away from Rāma, for you will never again belong to him. Lovely and blameless woman, as a human female, you are still yearning for that human Rāma, a failure and a weakling who has lost his kingdom."

[5–7] Hearing what the *rākṣasa* women had said, lotus-eyed Sītā, her eyes brimming with tears, spoke the following words: "This wicked thing, despised by everyone, that you have come together to urge upon me will never take hold in my mind. A human woman can never be a *rākṣasa*'s wife. You may all devour me if you like, but I will never do as you say. Whether he be downcast or cast out of the kingship, my husband remains my master!"

[8–14] When they heard how Sītā responded, the *rākṣasa* women were beside themselves with rage; and, as they had been so ordered by Rāvaṇa, they threatened her with harsh words. Hiding in the *śiṃśapā* tree, the monkey Hanumān listened in silence as the *rākṣasa* women menaced Sītā. Crowding in upon the trembling woman on every side, the *rākṣasa* women repeatedly licked their flaming-red and pendulous lips. In a towering rage, they quickly seized their battle-axes and said, "This woman does not deserve Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, for her husband!" Menaced by the fearsome *rākṣasa* women, that fair-faced woman moved under the *śiṃśapā* tree, wiping away her tears. Surrounded by the *rākṣasa* women, wide-eyed Sītā approached the *śiṃśapā* tree and stood there overwhelmed by grief. But even though she was emaciated, her face downcast, and her garments soiled, the fearsome *rākṣasa* women went on menacing her from every side.

[15–22] Then a deformed and fearsome-looking, sunken-bellied *rākṣasa* woman named Vinatā, whose very appearance bespoke her rage, spoke: "By now you have adequately demonstrated your love for your husband, Sītā; but, auspicious woman, excess in anything leads to disaster. Bless you, Maithilī, I am pleased with you, for you have fully observed the rules of human conduct. But now you must heed the good advice that I am about to give you. You must accept Rāvaṇa, lord of all the *rākṣasas*, as your husband. For he is as valorous and handsome as Indra Vāsava, lord of the gods. You must give up this insignificant human Rāma and take refuge in Rāvaṇa, who is skillful and exceedingly generous and who speaks kindly to all creatures. Covering your body with fragrant ointments and adorning yourself with heavenly ornaments, you must, from this day forward, Vaidehī, become the queen of all the worlds, like the goddess Svāhā, the consort of Agni, the god of fire, lovely woman, or Indra's consort, the goddess Śacī. What are you doing with this insignificant Rāma, who is, in any case, as good as dead, Vaidehī? If you don't do what I have told you, then all of us will eat you up this very moment!"

[23–27] Then Vikaṭā, a furious *rākṣasa* woman with sagging breasts, raised her fists and addressed her, bellowing: "Wicked-minded Maithilī, in our kindness and gentleness, we have put up with the many inappropriate things that you have said. Yet, still, you will not follow our timely and beneficial advice. Maithilī, you have been brought to the far shore of the ocean, which no other can reach, and you have been placed in Rāvaṇa's

formidable inner apartments. Since you have been imprisoned in the house of Rāvaṇa and are guarded by us, not even Indra himself, the smasher of citadels, can rescue you. You must take my words to heart, Maithilī; I am giving you good advice. Enough of these streams of tears; give up your useless grieving.

[28–32] "Choose joy and pleasure instead; give up your constant misery. Sītā, you should enjoy yourself to your heart's content with the king of the *rākṣasas*! Timid lady, you should know how transient is the youth of women. You should seize happiness before your own youth passes. Lady of intoxicating eyes, you should roam with the *rākṣasa* king through his lovely gardens and mountain parks. Seven thousand women will be at your command, lovely one. You must accept Rāvaṇa, lord of all the *rākṣasas*, as your husband. Or else, Maithilī, if you do not do exactly as I have told you, I shall tear out your heart and eat it!"

[33–37] Then another fierce-looking *rākṣasa* woman named Caṇḍodarī said these words as she brandished a huge lance: "The moment I saw this woman that Rāvaṇa has brought here, her eyes darting like a doe's and her breasts trembling with fear, I conceived a tremendous craving. I conceived a desire to eat her liver, spleen, *utpīḍa*, her heart with all its veins and arteries, her intestines, and her head." Then a *rākṣasa* woman named Praghasā said, "What are we waiting for? Let's strangle this heartless woman! We will tell the king that the woman is dead, and without a doubt, he will tell us, 'You may eat her!' "

[38–42] Next a *rākṣasa* woman named Ajāmukhī said: "Butcher her; then cut her all up into equal, bite-sized pieces. Then we can all have a share. I hate arguments! So quickly bring lots of things to drink and all kinds of garlands." Then a *rākṣasa* woman named Śūrpaṇakhā said: "I agree with what Ajāmukhī just said. So quickly bring wine, the banisher of every sorrow! Let us eat human flesh and dance before the goddess Nikumbhilā." Threatened in this fashion by those dreadful *rākṣasa* women, Sītā, who was like a daughter of the gods, lost her composure and wept.

Sarga 23

[1–3] As the hostile *rākṣasa* women were harshly saying these many cruel things, the daughter of Janaka began to weep. When virtuous Vaidehī had been addressed in this fashion by the *rākṣasa* women, she replied to them,

though she was terrified, in a voice choked with tears: “A human woman can never be a *rākṣasa*’s wife. You can all go ahead and devour me if you like; still, I will never do as you say.”

[4–9] Thus, Sītā, who was like a daughter of the gods, afflicted with sorrow and menaced by Rāvaṇa, could find no refuge there in the midst of the *rākṣasa* women. Sītā shook violently and seemed as if to shrink into herself, like a doe in the forest separated from her herd and beset by wolves. Steadying herself with a large, flowering branch of an *aśoka* tree, she brooded sorrowfully on her husband, her heart broken. Brooding and bathing her full breasts with her flowing tears, she could not find an end to her sorrow. She fell down trembling like a plantain tree in a high wind, terrified of the *rākṣasa* women. She turned very pale. As Sītā was trembling so violently, her long, thick braid shook as well, so that it looked like a writhing serpent.

[10–14] Afflicted, overcome by grief, her mind overwhelmed with sorrow, Maithilī sighed, shed tears, and lamented. Overcome by grief, the lovely woman cried out, “Oh Rāma!” and then again, “Oh Lakṣmaṇa! Oh Kausalyā, my mother-in-law! Oh Sumitrā! Since I have been able to survive even for a moment misery such as this—separated from Rāma and harassed by these cruel *rākṣasa* women—the popular maxim that the *paṇḍits* quote must be true indeed: ‘It is impossible for a man or a woman to die before the appointed time.’ Like a woman without a protector, this wretched woman, whose merit must be small, must surely perish, like a laden vessel struck by strong winds in the midst of the ocean.

[15–20] “Unable to see my husband and fallen into the clutches of the *rākṣasa* women, I am collapsing under my grief, like a riverbank undercut by water. How fortunate are those who are able to see my lord—his eyes like the inner petals of a lotus—who walks with the valorous gait of a lion and yet is so capable and soft-spoken. Separated from celebrated Rāma, there is no way that I can survive any more than if I had consumed virulent poison. What kind of crime did I commit in a previous life that has made me experience such cruel and terrible suffering? Engulfed by this great sorrow, I wish to end my life. Guarded by these *rākṣasa* women, I will never see Rāma again. How pathetic is this human state! How wretched to be under the power of another! Although I wish to, I cannot end my life.”

Sarga 24

[1–5] Speaking in this fashion, Janaka's young daughter began to lament, her face cast down and covered with tears. Grieving like a woman possessed, or a madwoman, or a woman in a state of utter confusion, she rolled on the ground like a filly: "Despite Rāghava's vigilance, I was violently and forcibly abducted, wailing, by the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa, who can change his form at will. Fallen into the clutches of the *rākṣasa* women, cruelly menaced, brooding, and overcome with terrible grief, I cannot go on living. Living among the *rākṣasa* women without the great chariot-warrior Rāma, life itself has no meaning for me, let alone wealth and jewelry.

[6–10] "A curse upon me, ignoble and unchaste, in that, wretched creature that I am, I have survived for even a moment without him. What desire can I have for life or happiness without my beloved, that soft-spoken lord of all the sea-bounded earth? I shall cast off my body; let them cut it up or eat it. For without my beloved, I cannot long endure this suffering. I would not touch that night-roaming *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa even with my left foot, much less fall in love with the despicable wretch! He must not understand that I have rejected him, nor can he be cognizant of what he really is and of his own lowly race, since, with his vicious nature, he tries to woo me.

[11–14] "You can slice me, dice me, chop me up, or roast me in a blazing fire! I will still never obey Rāvaṇa; so what is the use of your prattling on so long? Rāghava is renowned, wise, capable, and compassionate. Therefore, I think that it must be the exhaustion of my good fortune that has made this virtuous man so pitiless. For why has he who single-handedly annihilated fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* in Janasthāna not come for me? This *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa, who holds me captive, has very little strength. Surely my husband is capable of killing him in battle.

[15–20] "Why then has Rāma, who slew in battle that bull among *rākṣasas* Virādha in the Daṇḍaka forest, not come for me? Granted, it is difficult to assault Laṅkā, which is situated in the middle of the ocean. Still, there is nothing in the world that can stop the flight of Rāghava's arrows. Why has Rāma, so firm in his valor, not come to rescue his beloved wife, who has been carried off by a *rākṣasa*? I think that the older brother of Lakṣmaṇa must not know that I am here. For if that mighty man knew it, would he then endure this outrage? For the king of the vultures, who knew that I had been abducted and might have so informed Rāghava, was slain in

battle by Rāvaṇa. It was a great deed that Jaṭāyus performed in trying to rescue me, despite his advanced age, in single combat with Rāvaṇa.

[21–24] "If Rāghava had found out that I was here, then in his wrath, he would this very day rid the world of *rākṣasas*. He would wipe out the city of Laṅkā and dry up the mighty ocean. He would destroy the name and the reputation of that vile Rāvaṇa. There can be no doubt that just as I have been weeping, so will there be—in house after house—still greater weeping on the part of the *rākṣasa* women whose husbands have been slain. For Rāma together with Lakṣmaṇa will seek out Laṅkā and bring about the slaughter of the *rākṣasas*. For no enemy whom those two spy lives even for a moment. Indeed, soon this city of Laṅkā will resemble a cremation ground filled with flocks of vultures, its roads thick with the smoke of funeral pyres.

[25–31] "In a very short time, I shall gain my heart's desire. Your evil conduct foretells the downfall of you all. Evil portents such as are now seen in Laṅkā show that in a very short time the city will be stripped of its splendor. For it is certain that once the evil lord of the *rākṣasas*, Rāvaṇa, is slain, his unassailable citadel of Laṅkā will wither away like a young widow. Once its lord is killed, the city of Laṅkā, so rich in holy festivals, together with its *rākṣasas*, will resemble a beautiful woman whose husband has died. Very soon now I shall surely hear the sound of weeping *rākṣasa* maidens afflicted with grief in every house here. If only heroic Rāma, the corners of his eyes bloodred, should learn that I am living in the house of Rāvaṇa, the citadel of Laṅkā would be consumed by his arrows: plunged into darkness, its splendor destroyed, its bulls among *rākṣasas* slaughtered.

[32–36] "But the time that was allotted me by that cruel and vile Rāvaṇa has now all but elapsed. Now a great calamity arising from unrighteousness is about to befall these criminal *rākṣasas*, who do not know right from wrong. These flesh-eating *rākṣasas* simply do not understand proper conduct. Undoubtedly, this *rākṣasa* will have them fix me for his breakfast. Oh, in my great suffering, what shall I do without him—without seeing my handsome Rāma, the corners of his eyes bloodred? If only there were someone here to give me poison; then, deprived of my husband, I would soon meet Vaivasvata, the god of death.

[37–41] "Lakṣmaṇa's elder brother, Rāma, must not know that I am alive. For if they knew, it is impossible that the two of them would not

scour the earth for me. Surely the heroic elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa has gone—out of grief for me—from here to the world of the gods, leaving his body behind on earth. How fortunate are those gods, *gandharvas*, perfected beings, and supreme seers who now can see Rāma, my lotus-eyed lord. The wise royal seer Rāma, who is desirous only of righteousness, is, in reality, the Supreme Soul. Perhaps he has no use for me as a wife. Generally people have affection only for those who are actually present. There is no love for those who are far away. But then again, it is only ingrates who diminish their affection in this way. Rāma would never do so.

[42–45] "Is it that I am completely devoid of good qualities, or is it just the exhaustion of my good fortune, that I, Sītā, a young woman, should be bereft of Rāma, who is deserving of only the finest things? It would be better for me to die than to live without the great hero Rāma, tireless in his actions, destroyer of his foes. Or perhaps the two brothers, the foremost of men, have laid down their weapons and are wandering in the forest as forest dwellers, subsisting on roots and fruits. Or perhaps Rāvaṇa, the wicked lord of the *rākṣasas*, has slain the heroic brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa by means of some trick.

[46–49] "At such a time as this, I can wish only to die, but even in such suffering, death is not permitted for me. Fortunate, indeed, are those great and blessed sages who are revered for their truthfulness, who have subdued their minds, and for whom there is neither pleasure nor aversion. Pleasure arises from pleasant things, great aversion from the unpleasant. Homage to those great ones who detach themselves from both! Abandoned here by my beloved, celebrated Rāma, and fallen into the clutches of the wicked Rāvaṇa, I shall end my life."

Sarga 25

[1–3] Addressed in so vehement a fashion by Sītā, the *rākṣasa* women were beside themselves with rage. Some of them went hurrying to report to Rāvaṇa. The other dreadful-looking *rākṣasa* women closed in on Sītā and once again began harshly to speak to her with the same ill-intentioned words: "Vile Sītā, fixed in your evil ways, today—this very minute—the *rākṣasa* women will devour your flesh to their heart's content."

[4–8] But, at that very moment, an elderly *rākṣasa* woman named Trijaṭā, who had been sleeping, saw those vile creatures menacing Sītā and

said: “Eat yourselves, vile creatures! You shall never devour Sītā, Janaka’s beloved daughter and the daughter-in-law of Daśaratha. I just now had the most frightening, hair-raising dream, which foretold the annihilation of the *rākṣasas* and the triumph of this woman’s husband.” When the *rākṣasa* women, who had been beside themselves with rage, were addressed in this fashion by Trijaṭā, they became frightened, and they all said these words to her: “Tell us what was it like, this dream of yours, that you had in the night.”

[9–12] When Trijaṭā heard these words coming from the mouths of the *rākṣasa* women, she began to tell them about the dream she had had at daybreak: “I saw Rāghava. He was riding in a celestial carriage made of ivory. Yoked to a thousand horses, it was moving through the sky. And in that dream I saw Sītā as well. She was dressed in garments of white, and she stood on a white mountain surrounded by the sea. Rāma and she were as inseparably united as the sun, bringer of light, and its radiance. Then I saw that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa had mounted a great four-tusked elephant that looked like a mountain, and they were advancing.

[13–17] “Then those two tigers among men, wearing garlands and clothing of white and blazing with their own inner power, were waiting in attendance upon Jānakī. On the top of that mountain, Jānakī mounted the back of that elephant, which was ridden through the sky by her husband. And I saw that lotus-eyed woman rise from her husband’s lap to stroke the sun and moon with her hands. That magnificent elephant, ridden by the two princes and wide-eyed Sītā, was standing above Laṅkā. Then I saw Rāma himself, riding with Lakṣmaṇa in a chariot drawn by a yoke of eight white bulls. He was wearing garlands and clothing of white, and he was accompanied by his brother Lakṣmaṇa and his wife, Sītā.

[18–21] “I also saw Rāvaṇa. He had just fallen from his flying palace, Puṣpaka, and was lying on the ground. His garments were black, and his head was shaved. A woman was dragging him along. Then he was traveling toward the south in a chariot yoked to donkeys. He was covered with red garlands and unguents, and he was plunging into a pool of mud. A black woman with red garments, her body smeared with mud, had lassoed ten-necked Rāvaṇa around the neck and was dragging him to the south, the direction of Yama, god of death. Then ten-necked Rāvaṇa mounted on a

boar, Indrajit on a dolphin, and Kumbhakarṇa on a camel were all heading south.

[22–25] “There was a vast assembly of *rākṣasas* there, noisy with the sound of singing and musical instruments. They were all drinking, and their garlands and garments were all red. Then I saw the lovely city of Laṅkā—filled with horses and chariots—its towers and archways crumbling, fall into the sea. All the *rākṣasa* women were there—drinking oil, dancing, and laughing loudly—in a Laṅkā now blackened by ash. Kumbhakarṇa and all the other bulls among the *rākṣasas* had put on red garments and had plunged into a pool of cow dung.

[26–29] “Run away! Disappear! Rāghava will recover Sītā, and in a towering rage, he will destroy this city along with all the *rākṣasas*. Rāghava will not be pleased with those who have reviled and threatened his cherished and beloved wife, who devotedly shared his forest exile. So you had better stop your cruel taunts and speak in a conciliatory fashion. We should entreat with Sītā. That is what I think. An unhappy woman about whom one has a dream of this kind is sure to be freed from all her troubles and to attain supreme felicity.

[30–33] “What is the use of all this talk, *rākṣasa* women? You must go and entreat with her whom you have been menacing, for a dreadful danger to the *rākṣasas* has now arisen in the form of Rāghava. Now only Maithilī, the daughter of Janaka—and only if she is propitiated by our falling at her feet—can save the *rākṣasa* women from this grave danger. For I have not noticed even the slightest indication of any ominous signs anywhere on the person of this wide-eyed woman. I think that she has merely suffered a dimming of her radiance. This lady does not deserve to suffer; and she is the one I saw standing in the sky.

[34–38] “I foresee the accomplishment of Vaidehī’s desires—the destruction of the lord of the *rākṣasas* and the victory of Rāghava—to be at hand. Her eye as broad as a lotus petal is throbbing, and that is an omen that she will hear very welcome news. And well-bred Vaidehī’s arm—just the left one—has begun to tremble spontaneously, its hairs bristling slightly with joy. Her unsurpassed left thigh, which resembles an elephant’s trunk, foretells by its trembling that Rāghava will soon stand before her. And that bird, perched in its nest on the branch and joyously pouring forth its lovely

sweet notes over and over again, seems, in uttering its words of warm welcome, to be repeatedly encouraging Sītā."

Sarga 26

[1–4] When Sītā, so filled with pain, had heard the painful words of Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, she was as terrified as the daughter of an elephant king attacked by a lion in the depths of the forest. Surrounded by the *rākṣasa* women and cruelly menaced by the words of Rāvaṇa, timorous Sītā lamented, like a little girl abandoned in the midst of a desolate wilderness: "Virtuous folk in the world have a popular saying that there is no such thing as untimely death. Alas, it must be true if I, who lack all merit, have managed to survive even for a moment under such abuse. Devoid of happiness and filled with so much pain, truly my heart must be very hard indeed, since it has not shattered into a thousand pieces, like a mountain peak struck by lightning.

[5–8] "Surely suicide could not be reckoned as a crime in my case, since this creature—so hateful to my sight—is going to kill me anyway, while I am no more able to give him my affection than is a twice-born brahman able to teach a vedic *mantra* to a *śūdra*. Surely if Rāma, the lord of the world, does not come, the vile lord of the *rākṣasas* will soon dismember me with sharp knives, as a surgeon might a fetus in the womb. Alas, the two months allotted me, who have already suffered so long, will soon elapse! Then it will be for me, just as it would be for a thief, imprisoned and condemned to death for a crime against the crown, on the morning of his execution. Oh Rāma! Oh Lakṣmaṇa! Oh Sumitrā! Oh mother of Rāma, and my own mother as well! This luckless woman will perish like a ship foundering in a storm at sea.

[9–14] "Those vigorous sons of the lord of men must have been killed on my account through the strength of that creature in the form of a deer, just as a pair of bulls or lions might be killed by a bolt of lightning. It must have been Kāla himself in the guise of a deer who deluded hapless me at that time when, fool that I am, I sent away my husband—the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa—and the younger brother of Rāma as well. Alas, Rāma of the long arms, true to your vows! Alas, you whose face rivals the full moon! Alas, you benefactor and beloved of the whole world! You do not realize that I am to be slain by the *rākṣasas*. My taking you for my sole divinity,

my long suffering, my sleeping on the ground, and my rigorous adherence to righteousness—all this—my utter devotion to my husband, has been in vain, like the favors men do for ingrates. All my righteous conduct has been in vain, and my exclusive devotion to my husband useless. For pale and emaciated, I cannot see you; I am cut off from you without hope for our reunion. Once you have carried out your father's orders to the letter and have returned from the forest with your vow accomplished, you will, I think, make love with wide-eyed women, carefree, your purpose accomplished.

[15–17] "But as for hapless me, Rāma, after having loved you so long, given you all my heart—to my own undoing—and practiced my vows and penances in vain, I shall abandon my accursed life. I would quickly take my life with poison or some sharp weapon, but there is no one in the *rākṣasa*'s household to give me either." Burning with grief and brooding constantly on all these things, Sītā gathered her woven braid in her hand and said: "I shall at once hang myself by my woven braid and enter the presence of Yama, god of death."

[18–20] Thus did Sītā lament over and over, fondly remembering Rāma with all her heart. Then, trembling, her mouth gone dry, she approached the great blossoming tree. She whose every limb was soft approached the tree and took hold of one of its branches. Then she whose limbs were lovely began to think about Rāma, Rāma's younger brother, and her own family. And as she did so, many auspicious omens—well known in the world—appeared and inspired her with courage. They were omens such as had previously appeared and had been proven accurate.

Sarga 27

[1–4] Yet even as blameless and lovely Sītā, afflicted and bereft of all joy, stood there reduced to such a state, her mind in utter dejection, auspicious omens appeared to her like dependents before a wealthy man. That fair-tressed woman's lovely left eye—wide, white, black in the center, and fringed with curling lashes—began to tremble like a dark red lotus set trembling by a fish. Her left arm—so lovely, shapely, full, and round—which was fit for the finest aloe and sandalwood pastes and which had so long been caressed by her peerless beloved, now too began to tremble. And of her thighs, which pressed so close against each other, the lovely left one

—full and resembling an elephant's trunk—began to throb, foretelling that Rāma would soon stand before her.

[5–8] Then the auspicious and golden but slightly soiled garment of that bright-eyed woman—her limbs lovely and her teeth like the tips of jasmine buds—began to slip from its place. The fair-browed woman seemed to be restored to life by these and other auspicious signs she knew from before to be harbingers of good tidings, just as a seed—parched by wind and sun and nearly dead—revives with the rain. Her face—its lips like *bimba* fruit, its eyes, brows, bordering locks, and curling lashes lovely, and its teeth brilliant white—resembled the moon suddenly freed from the mouth of Rāhu, demon of the eclipse. Her sorrow dispelled, her lethargy gone, her fever cooled, and her spirit restored by joy, the noble lady's face lent her the same radiance as the cool-rayed, waxing moon lends the night in rising.

Sarga 28

[1–5] Now valorous Hanumān had fully overheard everything that had passed between Sītā and Trijaṭā as well as the threats of the *rākṣasa* women. As the monkey looked down upon that lady, who resembled a goddess in the Nandana gardens, several thoughts occurred to him: "I have at last found her whom many thousands and tens of thousands of monkeys are seeking in all directions. I have also seen whatever was to be seen by a well-trained spy moving about covertly to determine an enemy's strength. I have now seen the relative strengths of the *rākṣasas* and their citadel, as well as the power of Rāvaṇa, their lord.

[6–9] "It is now fitting for me to console the wife of him who is immeasurable and compassionate to all creatures, for she is longing to see her husband. I must comfort her whose face is like the full moon, for she who has never before experienced suffering can see no end to this suffering of hers. It would be wrong of me to leave without having first comforted this lady, whose mind is overwhelmed by grief. For if I were simply to leave, the illustrious princess Jānakī, seeing no salvation, might take her own life.

[10–12] "It would also be proper for me to reassure the great-armed warrior whose face is like the full moon and who is yearning for the sight of Sītā. But I cannot speak to her right in front of those night-roaming *rākṣasa* women. What then am I to do in this predicament? Still, if I do not comfort

her through the remaining portion of the night, there can be no doubt that she will take her own life.

[13–16] “And if Rāma should ask me, ‘What message did Sītā have for me?’ what could I possibly tell him if I had not spoken with that fair-waisted woman? If I were to return from here in haste without bringing a message from Sītā, then—in his rage—Kākutstha might burn me up with his fiery glance. If that were the case, then my having engaged my master on Rāma’s behalf and his coming here with his armies would be all in vain. So I shall remain here, waiting for some lapse in the vigilance of the *rākṣasa* women, at which point I may quietly comfort this woman, who is filled with so much sorrow.

[17–21] “Since I am so very tiny and a monkey to boot, I had best speak Sanskrit, the language of humans. On the other hand, if I were to speak Sanskrit like a twice-born brahman, then Sītā would take me for Rāvaṇa and be frightened. Still, I must speak comprehensibly to her in the language of the people, for there is no other way for me to reassure this blameless woman. When she sees what I look like and hears how I speak, Jānakī, who has already been terrorized by the *rākṣasas*, may become terrified once again. And if the virtuous, wide-eyed lady should become terrified, she might cry out, taking me for Rāvaṇa, who can change his shape at will.

[22–27] “And if Sītā should cry out, then that dreadful horde of *rākṣasa* women, like Yama, the ender of all things, himself, would rush here at once, armed with all manner of weapons. Then those hideous creatures would swarm all around me, trying their utmost to capture or kill me. If they should see me leaping among the trunks, limbs, and branches of these great trees, they would be filled with fear and apprehension. When they see my huge form as I race through this grove, the hideous *rākṣasa* women will be terrified. Those *rākṣasa* women will then summon the *rākṣasas* who are employed by the *rākṣasa* lord in his household. Those terrifying creatures will come rushing swiftly in turn to join the fray with lances, arrows, swords, and various other weapons in their hands.

[28–31] “If I were to be surrounded by the army of the *rākṣasas*, I could, in the fury of battle, utterly destroy it. But then I might not be able to reach the farther shore of the mighty ocean. On the other hand, a large number of those swift creatures might pounce on me and capture me. Then she would not get my message, for I would be a prisoner. Or these creatures, who

delight in violence, might kill the daughter of Janaka. Then the entire mission of Rāma and Sugrīva would come to nothing. Jānakī is now dwelling in this hidden and inaccessible country, which is surrounded by *rākṣasas* and completely isolated by the sea.

[32–35] "If I were to be killed or taken in battle by the *rākṣasas*, I cannot think of anyone else who could help Rāma to accomplish his mission. Even upon reflection, I can think of no monkey who could leap over the great sea—a hundred leagues across—if I were slain. True, I am capable of annihilating thousands of *rākṣasas*, but then I would not be able to reach the far shore of the mighty ocean. Then again, battle is an uncertain business, and I do not like uncertainty. For what intelligent person would unreflectingly engage in an affair whose outcome is uncertain?

[36–40] "Such is the great drawback in my speaking to Sītā. On the other hand, if I do not speak to her, Vaidehī may take her own life. If the place and time are not propitious or if the agent is injudicious, even well-conceived plans can come to nothing like darkness at sunrise. Even a firm decision as to what ought or ought not be done can come to nothing. For messengers who think they are clever can destroy an undertaking. How can the failure of the mission be avoided? How can I avoid making a blunder? How can I ensure that my leaping over the ocean will not prove to have been in vain? How might she hear what I have to say without becoming terrified?" When he had reflected in this fashion, wise Hanumān reached a decision.

[41–44] "If I speak about her husband, Rāma, tireless in action, then I will not frighten her, for her mind will be absorbed in thoughts of him. If I speak words that are auspicious and in keeping with righteousness concerning celebrated Rāma, foremost of the Ikṣvākus, then in speaking these sweet words, I shall be able to get her to hear me out. I shall tell her everything in such a way that she believes me." Thus demonstrating in many ways his concern for the wife of the lord of the universe, noble Hanumān—still hidden within the branches of the tree—began to speak sweetly and truthfully.

Sarga 29

[1–4] When he had deliberated in all these different ways, the great monkey spoke these sweet words within range of Vaidehī's hearing: "There once

was a king named Daśaratha, a master of chariots, elephants, and horses. He was pious in conduct, greatly renowned, honorable, and glorious. Born in a line of universal emperors, he was equal in strength to Indra, smasher of citadels. He was devoted to nonviolence, magnanimous, merciful, and truly valorous. He was the chief of the House of Ikṣvāku, and he was both prosperous and the increaser of prosperity. He was a bull among kings and very majestic. He was marked with all the signs of kingship. Happy and a giver of happiness, he was renowned throughout the four-cornered earth.

[5–9] "His beloved eldest son—whose face was like the moon, the lord of stars—was named Rāma. He was learned and was the foremost among all bowmen. That scorcher of his enemies was the guardian of his own conduct and of his kinsmen. He was the guardian of all creatures and of righteousness itself. On the orders of his aged father, steadfast in truthfulness, that hero went into exile in the forest accompanied by his wife and his brother. There Jānakī was abducted by Rāvaṇa in his rage at hearing that Rāma, while out hunting in the deep forest, had killed Khara and Dūṣaṇa and effected a slaughter in Janasthāna. And now I have found her, for she is just as I heard Rāma describe her in respect to her beauty, her complexion, and her splendor."

[10–12] When he had spoken these words, that bull among monkeys fell silent. But as for Jānakī, she was greatly astonished to hear them. That timorous lady of the beautiful, curling tresses turned her face, framed by her flowing hair, upward and gazed at the *śiṃśapā* tree. Looking sideways, up, and down, she spied at last the inconceivably wise son of the wind god and minister of the lord of the monkeys. He looked like the rising sun.

Sarga 30

[1–8] Her thoughts in a whirl, the lady spied a monkey hidden among the branches. He was soft-spoken and humble. Seeing that best of tawny monkey standing humbly before her, lovely Maithilī thought, "This must be a dream!" Upon seeing him, she completely lost consciousness and seemed almost as if dead. When, after a long time, she had regained consciousness, the wide-eyed lady thought: "I have just now had a horrible dream! A monkey in a dream is held by all the *śāstras* to be inauspicious. May no evil befall Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, or my father, King Janaka! But this cannot be a dream! For afflicted as I am with grief and sorrow, I cannot sleep. And there

is no rest for me, so long as I am separated from him whose face is like the full moon. I am tormented by my love for him, my every thought is of him, and, from my incessant brooding upon him, I see and hear him constantly. I think this must be some hallucination, but then I reason with my mind, ‘What is the basis for this? Such a thing has no substance.’ But this creature who is addressing me has a clearly perceptible form. I pay homage to Bṛhaspati, lord of speech, along with Indra, wielder of the *vajra*; to self-existent Brahmā, and to Agni, eater of oblations. Let what this forest creature has said in my presence prove true and not otherwise.”

Sarga 31

[1–3] Placing his cupped hands to his head, mighty Hanumān, son of Māruta, then addressed Sītā in a sweet voice: “Who are you, blameless lady, your eyes like lotus petals, who stand here in a garment of worn silk clinging to a branch of this tree? Why do tears of sorrow pour from your eyes, like water dripping from two lotus petals?

[4–10] “Which one of the gods, *asuras*, great serpents, *gandharvas*, *rākṣasas*, *yakṣas*, or *kinnaras* are you, lovely one? Or are you one of the Rudras, Maruts, or Vasus, fair-faced woman? Lovely lady, you seem to me to be a divinity. Can you be Rohiṇī, foremost of heavenly bodies, excellent and endowed with every virtue, who—separated from your lord, the moon—has fallen from the world of the gods? Or, black-eyed woman, are you not auspicious Arundhatī, who has annoyed her husband Vasiṣṭha through anger or foolishness? Fair-waisted woman, can it be that you are grieving for a son, a father, a brother, or husband who has passed from this world to the next? I have observed your figure and the characteristic signs on your body, and I have concluded that you must be the queen of some lord of the earth and the daughter of a king. Bless you. Please tell me, since I am asking, if you are that Sītā whom Rāvaṇa carried off by force from Janasthāna?”

[11–14] Hearing these words, Vaidehī, who was thrilled by the mention of Rāma’s name, replied to Hanumān, who was still up in the tree: “My name is Sītā. I am the daughter of the great Janaka Vaideha and the wife of wise Rāma. For twelve years I lived in Rāghava’s house, enjoying all human pleasures and having everything that I could possibly want. Then—

in the thirteenth year—the king, along with his preceptors, undertook the consecration of that heir to the Ikṣvāku dynasty as king.

[15–18] "But while the preparations for Rāma's consecration were under way, Queen Kaikeyī said these words to her husband: 'Henceforth I shall take neither food nor drink. If Rāma is consecrated, that will mark the end of my life. If, foremost of kings, what you promised when you were pleased with me is not to prove false, Rāghava must go to the forest.' When the king, who was always true to his promise, heard those cruel and unwelcome words of Queen Kaikeyī and remembered granting her boons, he fainted.

[19–22] "Then, weeping, the elderly king—so firm in his adherence to the code of truthfulness—had to beg his eldest, glorious son for the kingdom. That majestic prince immediately accepted his father's words with all his heart, for they were far more important to him than his own consecration. He then gave voice to his acceptance. Truly valorous Rāma only gives, he never takes. And he would never speak unkindly, even to save his life. The glorious prince cast aside his costly garments, abandoned the kingship wholeheartedly, and consigned me to the care of his mother.

[23–27] "But leading the way before him, I at once set forth to be a forest dweller. For without him life, even in heaven, would have no charm for me. But even before that, illustrious Saumitri, delighter of his friends, had adorned himself in barkcloth garments in order to accompany his elder brother. Firm in our vows, adhering strictly to our lord's command, we entered that impenetrable wilderness, which none of us had ever seen before. It was while that prince of immeasurable might was living in the Daṇḍaka forest that I, his wife, was abducted by the wicked *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa. He has set for me two months as a grace period. At the end of the two months, I must die!"

Sarga 32

[1–6] When Hanumān, leader of the troops of tawny monkeys, heard Sītā, who had been so overwhelmed by sorrow after sorrow, he responded to her with these comforting words: "My lady, I am a messenger who has come to you at the bidding of Rāma. Rāma is well, Vaidehī, and inquires about your well-being. My lady, Dāśarathi, foremost among those who know the *vedas* and who has mastered the divine weapon of Brahmā as well as the *vedas*, inquires about your well-being. And your husband's beloved follower,

immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa, himself tormented by grief, bows his head in obeisance to you.” When the lady heard that those two lions among men were well, her whole body trembled with joy, and she spoke to Hanumān: “Indeed, it seems to me that the popular saying, ‘Joy will eventually come to a person who lives, even if it takes a hundred years,’ is true.”

[7–12] Through their meeting in this fashion, both of them experienced extraordinary delight. Then, trusting in each other, they engaged in conversation. Hearing the words of Sītā, so downcast with sorrow, Hanumān, leader of the troops of tawny monkey, began to draw nearer. But the closer Hanumān came, the more Sītā began to suspect that he was really Rāvaṇa, thinking to herself: “Oh what a stupid thing I have done to tell him all of this! Surely this must be Rāvaṇa, who has taken on another form.” Emaciated from grief, that woman of flawless limbs then let go of the branch of the *aśoka* tree and collapsed to the ground. The great-armed monkey prostrated himself before the daughter of Janaka, but—once more overcome with fear—she could not look at him.

[13–16] When at last Sītā, her face like the moon, saw him making his obeisance, she heaved a deep sigh and in her sweet voice addressed the monkey: “If you are, in fact, Rāvaṇa, master of illusion, employing illusion to further torment me, then it is not right. Surely you are the same Rāvaṇa I saw in Janasthāna, the one who had abandoned his natural appearance and taken on that of a wandering ascetic. Night-roaming *rākṣasa*, you who can change your shape at will, it is not right for you to further torment me now that I am disconsolate and emaciated from fasting.

[17–20] “But if you have really come here as a messenger of Rāma, then bless you. I would like to question you further, best of monkeys, for I love to hear about Rāma. Please speak further about the virtues of my beloved Rāma. You steal away my heart, gentle monkey, as the current of a river does the riverbank. Oh! How delightful is this dream in which I—so long ago abducted—now see a forest creature sent by Rāghava. If I could only see heroic Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa—even in a dream—I should not give way to despair. But even my dreams have been horrible.

[21–24] “But I do not think this is a dream. For no one who sees a monkey in a dream experiences good fortune; and good fortune seems now to be at hand for me. Can it be that this is some mental delusion or some hallucination? Or can it be, perhaps, some manifestation of mental disorder,

or perhaps just a mirage? On the other hand, this cannot be a mental disorder or a delusion with the symptoms of mental disorder; for I clearly perceive both myself and this forest creature.” After thus considering all aspects of the situation, Sītā concluded—on the basis of the *rākṣasas*’ ability to change their forms at will—that this must indeed be the king of the *rākṣasas*.

[25–29] Once she had come to this conclusion, the slender-waisted daughter of Janaka, Sītā, would not even reply to the monkey. Realizing what she was thinking, Hanumān, son of Māruta, tried to encourage her with words that would be welcome to her ears: “That great man, under the shadow of whose arms the world is protected, is as brilliant as the sun and as beloved by all creatures as the moon. Like the god Vaiśrāvaṇa, he is the king of all the world. He is as valorous as glorious Viṣṇu and as truthful and sweetly spoken as the god Bṛhaspati, lord of speech. He is as handsome, charming, and majestic as Kandarpa, the god of love incarnate. He directs his anger and his weapons only at those who deserve them. He is the foremost chariot-warrior in the world.

[30–33] “You will soon witness the punishment of him who lured Rāghava out of the ashram through the ruse of a deer and abducted you when the place was deserted. It is he who has sent me as a messenger to your side. That is why I have come. Afflicted with misery in separation from you, he now inquires about your well-being. That mighty man will soon kill Rāvaṇa in battle with arrows loosed in anger and blazing like fire, the purifier. Great-armed Lakṣmaṇa, mighty enhancer of Sumitrā’s joy, also respectfully salutes you and inquires after your welfare.

[34–39] “Rāma also has an ally, my lady, the monkey Sugrīva, the king over all the monkey leaders. He too inquires after your welfare. Rāma thinks of you continually and so do Lakṣmaṇa and Sugrīva. You are lucky to be alive, Vaidehī, after falling into the clutches of the *rākṣasa* women! Very soon you will see Rāma, the great chariot-warrior Lakṣmaṇa, and Sugrīva of immeasurable strength standing in the midst of tens of millions of monkeys. I am the monkey Hanumān, a minister of Sugrīva. I have leapt across the great ocean and entered Laṅkā. Relying on my own valor, I have come to see you and in so doing have placed my foot on the head of wicked Rāvaṇa. I am not what you think I am, my lady. Don’t be afraid! You must believe me when I speak to you.”

Sarga 33

[1–4] After hearing that account of Rāma from that bull among monkeys, Vaidehī spoke soothing words in a sweet voice: “Where did you come into contact with Rāma? How do you know Lakṣmaṇa? How can there be a relationship between men and monkeys? Tell me once again, monkey, of the characteristic marks of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa so that sorrow shall not overwhelm me. What are his form and figure like? What are his thighs like and his arms? Tell me about Rāma and all about Lakṣmaṇa as well.”

[5–9] When Hanumān, son of Māruta, had been addressed in this fashion by Vaidehī, he began to describe Rāma accurately: “Ah Vaidehī! Even though, lotus-eyed woman, you have the good fortune to know all this, still you ask me about your husband’s form and that of Lakṣmaṇa. Wide-eyed lady, now listen as I describe the distinguishing marks of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, which I have observed. Rāma has eyes like lotus petals, and he ravishes the hearts of all creatures. He was born endowed with beauty and skill, daughter of Janaka. He is like the sun in splendor, the equal of the earth in forbearance; he is Bṛhaspati’s equal in intelligence, the equal of Indra Vāsava in fame.

[10–14] “He is the protector of all living beings and the protector of his own kinsmen. He is the guardian of his own conduct and of righteousness. He is a scorcher of his foes. Lovely lady, Rāma is the guardian of the four classes of society. He is both the establisher and enforcer of the norms of social behavior. He is radiant and profoundly worshiped. He is firm in his vow of continence. He knows how to help the virtuous and how to perform the vedic rites. He is well versed in the science of governance, and he worships the brahmans. He is learned and possessed of fine character. He is humble, yet a scorcher of his foes. He is well versed in *Yajurveda* and highly respected by those who know the *vedas*. He is well grounded in the *vedas* and their subsidiary sciences, and in the science of arms.

[15–19] “His shoulders are broad and his arms are massive. His neck is like a conch shell and his face is beautiful. His collarbone is set deep in muscle, his eyes pleasantly reddish. Everyone has heard of Rāma, my lady. His voice resounds with the sound of a war drum. His complexion is smooth and dark, and he is valorous. His proportions are perfect, and his limbs well formed and symmetrical. Three parts of his body are firm, three are pendant, three are even, and three are prominent. His body is marked by

three creases. Three parts of his body are depressed, and four are short. His head is marked by three whorls. He has four marks on his thumb, his body has four lines, he is six feet in height, and four parts of his body are symmetrical. His fourteen pairs of body parts are symmetrical; he has four pronounced teeth and a fourfold gait. His lips, jaw, and nose are prominent. Five of his body parts are glossy, and eight are extended. Ten of his body parts resemble lotuses, and ten are large. He is pervaded by the three qualities. Two parts of his body sparkle. Six parts of his body protrude, and nine are slender. Rāghava fully experiences the three goals of man.

[20–25] "He is majestic and utterly devoted to truth and righteousness. He is devoted to the accumulation of wealth and its gracious dispensation. He knows the proper divisions of time and place, and he is soft-spoken to everyone. His unvanquished brother Saumitri, born of a different mother, is just like him in affection, appearance, and virtues. When the two of them were roaming the land in search of you, they met the monkey lord, handsome Sugrīva, who, dethroned by his elder brother and afflicted with fear of him, had taken shelter on the densely forested slopes of Mount Ṛśyamūka. We were in the service of Sugrīva, the king of the tawny monkeys—always true to his promises—who had been cast out of the kingdom by his elder brother. Wearing barkcloth garments and bearing magnificent bows, those two heroes then came to the charming region of Mount Ṛśyamūka.

[26–30] "Upon seeing the two tigers among men armed with bows, that bull among monkeys was stupefied with terror, and he went leaping up to the summit of the mountain. Still remaining on that peak, the lord of the monkeys swiftly sent me on alone to meet the two of them. Acting on Sugrīva's orders, my hands cupped in reverence, I approached those two lordly tigers among men who were so well endowed with beauty and auspicious marks. When I had acquainted them with the situation, they were pleased. So placing them on my back, I brought those bulls among men to that spot. I told great Sugrīva the truth about them. Then, as a result of their conversation, great affection arose between them.

[31–34] "The lord of the tawny monkeys and the lord of men—both glorious—consoled each other in conversation about what had earlier befallen each of them. First, the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa consoled Sugrīva, who had been banished by his enormously powerful brother,

Vālin, on account of a woman. Next, Lakṣmaṇa told the monkey lord Sugrīva of the grief experienced by Rāma, tireless in action, over losing you. When the monkey lord had heard the words uttered by Lakṣmaṇa, his radiance paled, like that of the many-rayed sun eclipsed by a planet.

[35–41] "The leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys then brought Rāma the masses of jewelry that had adorned your limbs but had been thrown to the ground when you were being carried off by the *rākṣasa*. They eagerly displayed them all, but they did not know where you had gone. When those ornaments, which had fallen with a jingling sound and which I myself had gathered up, were presented to Rāma, he fainted. Placing those lovely ornaments in his lap, that godlike monarch wept bitterly. As he looked at them, weeping and grieving over and over again, those ornaments only further inflamed the fire of Dāśarathi's grief. Although the great man lay there for a long time stricken with grief, I managed with great effort and various encouraging words to revive him. Gazing on those costly ornaments and showing them to us again and again, Rāghava together with Saumitri gave them into the keeping of Sugrīva.

[42–46] "Rāghava is burning with anguish at not being able to see you, noble lady, just like a volcano with the great fire that constantly blazes within it. Sleeplessness, grief, and anxiety burn great Rāghava on your account, just as do fires a fire shrine. Rāghava has been profoundly shaken by his sorrow over not seeing you, as a great and lofty mountain is shaken by a mighty earthquake. Since he cannot see you, princess, he no longer takes any pleasure in the enchanting woodlands, rivers, and waterfalls among which he wanders. But Rāghava, that tiger among men, will swiftly get you back, daughter of Janaka, once he has slain Rāvaṇa, his allies, and his kinsmen.

[47–49] "For at that very same time, Rāma and Sugrīva made a pact together to kill Vālin and to search for you. Quickly killing Vālin in battle, Rāma made Sugrīva lord over all the hosts of apes and tawny monkeys. And that, my lady, is how the union between Rāma and Sugrīva came about. Know that I am Hanumān, their emissary, who have come here.

[50–56] "Once Sugrīva had acquired a kingdom of his own, he summoned all the great and mighty tawny monkeys and dispatched them in all the ten directions for your sake. Those mighty monkeys, resembling lordly mountains, journeyed all over the earth at the command of Sugrīva,

lord of the monkeys. Vālin's fortunate son, that tiger among monkeys, mighty Añgada, set out with one-third of the army. But we got lost in the mighty Vindhya mountain range, and many days and nights passed while we were consumed with grief. At last, since we had lost all hope of accomplishing our mission and because of the passing of our allotted time and our fear of the monkey king, we resolved to end our lives. After searching forests, inaccessible mountains, hills, and mountain streams without finding the lady's location, we resolved to end our lives. Añgada was deeply immersed in an ocean of grief, mourning your loss, Vaidehī, the slaying of Vālin, our undertaking to fast unto death, and the death of Jaṭāyus.

[57–61] "Then, just when we had lost all hope because of our master's command and desired only to die, a huge and powerful bird came there as if for the purpose of our mission. It was Saṃpāti, king of the vultures and brother of the vulture king Jaṭāyus. When he learned that his brother had been slain, he spoke these words in anger: 'Who slew my younger brother? Where was he killed? I wish you would tell me this, great monkeys.' Añgada told him, just as it had happened, about the great slaying of Jaṭāyus—on your account—in Janasthāna by a terrifying *rākṣasa*. Saṃpāti, the son of Aruṇa, was deeply grieved to learn of the slaying of Jaṭāyus; and he told us that you, fair-hipped woman, were living in the abode of Rāvaṇa.

[62–65] "When we heard those delightful words of Saṃpāti, we leaping monkeys, gratified, delighted, and eager to find you, set out at once under the leadership of Añgada. And as the army of tawny monkeys despaired at the sight of the ocean, I put aside my terrible fear and leapt one hundred leagues. That night, I entered Lañkā, which was filled with *rākṣasas*, and there I saw Rāvaṇa and you, so crushed by grief. Now I have told you everything just as it happened, blameless woman. Please speak to me, my lady, for I am a messenger of Dāśarathi.

[66–72] "You must realize, my lady, that I—a minister of Sugrīva and the son of Pavana the wind god—have made this effort on Rāma's behalf and have come here on your account. Your Kākutstha, foremost of all those who bear weapons, is well, as is Lakṣmaṇa, who bears auspicious signs and is always engaged in pleasing his elder brother. I am dedicated to the welfare of your mighty husband, my lady, and I have come here alone at the behest of Sugrīva. I am able to take on any form at will. Roaming about

with no one to assist me, I managed to cover the entire southern region, eager to pick up your trail. Fortunately, I shall now be able to end the suffering of the soldiers, those tawny monkeys grieving over your loss, with the news that I have found you. Fortunately, my lady, my leap over the ocean has not been in vain. Fortunately, I shall acquire great fame for having found you. Soon mighty Rāghava will slay the *rākṣasa* lord Rāvaṇa, his allies, and his kinsmen and take you back.

[73–75] "Vaidehī, there is a mountain called Kauraja, foremost of mountains, from which the tawny monkey Kesarin proceeded to Mount Gokarṇa. On the instructions of the divine seers, that great monkey, my father, slew Śambasādana at the holy bathing spot at the shore of the sea, the lord of rivers. Through the agency of the wind god, I was born to that monkey's wife, O Maithilī. I am Hanumān, renowned throughout the world for my feats. It was in order to inspire your trust, Vaidehī, that I enumerated the virtues of your husband."

[76–80] Although Sītā was drawn with grief, she was reassured by these plausible explanations. Also, through the force of these adequate tokens of identification, she understood that he was indeed a messenger. Jānakī then experienced unequaled delight, and in her happiness she shed tears of joy from her eyes with their curling lashes. The lovely face of that wide-eyed woman—its long eyes all red and white—lit up, like the moon, the lord of stars, when released from Rāhu, demon of the eclipse. For she realized that the monkey was none other than Hanumān. Hanumān then spoke further to that lovely woman: "After that mighty monkey had slain the *asura* Śambasādana in battle at the command of the great seers, Maithilī, I was born as a monkey, a son of the wind god and equal to him in power."

Sarga 34

[1–2] Hanumān, the immensely powerful son of Māruta, humbly addressed further words to Sītā in order to inspire her confidence: "I am a monkey, virtuous woman, a messenger of wise Rāma. My lady, look at this ring marked with Rāma's name. Take heart, bless you, for your troubles will soon be at an end."

[3–7] Taking her husband's ring and examining it, Jānakī was as joyous as if she had rejoined her husband. Her lovely face—its long eyes all red and white—lit up with joy, like the moon, the lord of stars, when released

from Rāhu, demon of the eclipse. Then that shy young woman, delighted at the message from her husband and deeply gratified at hearing such good news, praised the great monkey: “You must be valiant, capable, and wise, best of monkeys, since you have been able to breach the stronghold of the *rākṣasas* single-handedly. You are to be greatly praised for your valor, for in leaping you have crossed the mighty ocean, a hundred leagues in breadth, the lair of sea monsters, as easily as if it were a puddle in a cow’s hoofprint.

[8–13] “I do not think you are any ordinary monkey, bull among monkeys, since you have neither fear nor even the slightest agitation with regard to Rāvaṇa. Since you have been sent by celebrated Rāma, you are worthy of conversing with me, best of monkeys. Unassailable Rāma would not send someone who was untested or whose valor he did not know, especially not to me. What a blessing that Rāma—righteous and devoted to truth—and mighty Lakṣmaṇa, increaser of Sumitrā’s joy, are well. But if Kākutstha is indeed well, then why in his rage does he not burn up the ocean-girdled earth, as does the cosmic fire that arises at the end of the cosmic era? Those two heroes are certainly capable of subduing even the gods, but still I see no reversal of my misfortunes.

[14–18] “I trust that Rāma is not deeply distressed. I trust that he is not suffering. I trust that the foremost of men is taking all necessary action. I trust that he is not depressed or agitated and that he is not confused as to what he should do. I trust that the king’s son is making all human efforts. I trust that he has recourse to the twofold and threefold strategies as well as the single strategy. I trust that the scorcher of his foes remains friendly toward his allies and eager to conquer his enemies. I trust that he is acquiring allies and that others seek him out to be their ally. I trust that his allies are helpful to him and that they always treat him with deference. I trust that the king’s son always seeks the grace of the gods, and I trust that he relies on human efforts as well as destiny.

[19–23] “I trust that Rāghava has not stopped loving me because I am so far away. I trust that he will rescue me from this nightmare. Rāma was always accustomed to happiness and never to sorrow. I trust that now, having experienced this terrible unhappiness, he does not collapse. I trust that he has been continually receiving news that Kausalyā, Sumitrā, and Bharata are all well. I trust that Rāghava, who deserves the highest honor, has not been overwhelmed with grief on my account. I trust that he has not

had a change of heart. I trust that he will rescue me. I trust that on my account Bharata, so devoted to his brother, will send a vast and formidable army under the protection of his ministers—its pennants flying.

[24–28] "I trust that the majestic lord of the monkeys Sugrīva too will come on my account, accompanied by heroic tawny monkeys with teeth and claws for weapons. I trust that heroic Lakṣmaṇa, increaser of Sumitrā's joy and a master of divine weapons, will scatter the *rākṣasas* with a hail of arrows. I trust that I will soon see Rāvaṇa, his allies, and his kinsmen slain by Rāma in battle with some terrifying divine weapon. I trust that, saddened by grief without me, Rāma's face—whose color is that of gold and whose fragrance that of the lotus—will not fade like a lotus when its pond dries up. I trust that he who showed no fear, no grief, nor any agitation when he renounced the kingship in the name of righteousness and who led me into the wilderness on foot can sustain such stoicism in his heart.

[29–30] "No one is dearer to him than I or even as dear: not his mother, his father, or anyone else. Emissary, I wish to live only so long as I can hear news of my beloved." When the beautiful lady had uttered those words—so meaningful and so pleasant in substance—to that best of monkeys, she paused so that she might once more hear his charming words, which concerned Rāma's mission.

[31–35] When the son of the wind god, Māruti, whose power was fearsome, had heard Sītā's words, he touched his hands—cupped in reverence—to his head and replied: "Lotus-eyed Rāma does not know you are here. Once Rāghava hears what I have to say, he will come at once. Bringing with him a vast army consisting of troops of apes and tawny monkeys and rendering the sea—imperturbable abode of Varuṇa—motionless with a torrent of arrows, Kākutstha will rid the city of Laṅkā of its *rākṣasas*. Rāma will kill anyone who may get in his way, whether it be the gods and the *asuras* or even Mṛtyu himself. For, beset by the sorrow of not being able to see you, noble lady, Rāma can no more find peace than can an elephant harried by a lion.

[36–38] "My lady, I swear to you by Mount Dardara, by roots and fruits, and by the mountains Malaya, Vindhya, Meru, and Mandara, that you will once again see Rāma's handsome face—with its beautiful eyes, its lips like *bimba* fruit, and its lovely earrings—resembling the full moon rising. Soon,

Vaidehī, you will see Rāma seated on Mount Prasravaṇa, like Indra of the hundred sacrifices seated at the very summit of heaven.

[39–44] "Rāghava takes no meat, nor does he drink honey-wine. He restricts himself to boiled rice and the foods prescribed for forest ascetics, and even that only at every fifth mealtime. His mind is so completely fixed on you that he does not even brush the flies, mosquitoes, insects, and snakes away from his body. Rāma is constantly obsessed with brooding, constantly absorbed in his grief, completely under the power of love. He cannot think of anything else. Rāma almost never sleeps, but even when that best of men does fall asleep, he wakes up murmuring, 'Sītā,' in a sweet voice. Whenever he sees some fruit or flower or anything else that women like, he sighs and calls out for you over and over again, crying, 'Alas, my darling!' In constant agony, my lady, the great prince, firm in his ascetic vows, calls out to you, crying, 'Sītā!' He is making every effort to get you back."

[45] With her grief dispelled by hearing the news of Rāma but made equal to his by hearing of his suffering, the daughter of Janaka Vaideha resembled a night at the very beginning of autumn when the moon is partly obscured by the last remnants of the rain clouds.

Sarga 35

[1–4] Upon hearing those words, Sītā, her face like the full moon, spoke in turn to Hanumān with words that were sensible and in keeping with righteousness: "What you have said to me, monkey, that Rāma has had no change of heart but that he is constantly absorbed in his grief, is like nectar mixed with poison. Whether a man enjoys immense power or suffers the most dreadful calamities, fate ties him with its rope and drags him. Surely the destiny of living creatures is inescapable, best of leaping monkeys. Just see how Saumitri, Rāma, and I have been confounded by calamity.

[5–8] "When will Rāghava, like a shipwrecked sailor swimming exhausted in the sea, reach the farther shore of his sorrow? When will my lord destroy the *rākṣasas*, kill Rāvaṇa, uproot Laṅkā itself, and see me again? You must tell him, 'Make haste!' For I shall live only until my allotted year has elapsed. It is now the tenth month; only two more remain, leaping monkey, for that was the period allotted me by cruel Rāvaṇa.

[9–13] "His brother Vibhīṣaṇa made strenuous efforts to persuade him to give me back, but he would not agree to that. Rāvaṇa does not choose to

give me back, even though he has fallen under the power of fate, and Mṛtyu, god of death, stalks him in battle. All this was related to me by Vibhīṣaṇa's eldest daughter, the maiden Analā herself, who was sent by her mother, O monkey. A wise, learned, and elderly bull among *rākṣasas*, Avindhya, who is steadfast and a person of character, urged upon Rāvaṇa that Rāma would wreak destruction upon the *rākṣasas*. But even though that wicked creature holds Avindhya in high esteem, he would not heed his beneficial words.

[14–18] "I would expect, best of tawny monkeys, that my lord will soon come for me, for my heart is pure and his virtues are numerous. Monkey, Rāghava is endowed with energy, bravery, strength, kindness, competence, valor, and power. Since, even without his brother, he slew fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* in Janasthāna, which of his foes would not tremble? That bull among men cannot be daunted by adversities, for I know his resolution as well as Śacī, the daughter of Puloman, knows the resolution of Śakra. Surely that sun, maker of day, in the form of heroic Rāma, with a hail of arrows for his fierce rays, will dry up that water in the form of his *rākṣasa* foes, monkey."

[19–25] After Sītā, emaciated with grief on account of Rāma, had finished speaking in this fashion, her face was bathed with tears. The monkey Hanumān then said to her: "As soon as Rāghava hears what I have to say, he will come here leading a vast army of apes and tawny monkeys. But better still, I myself shall free you from this *rākṣasa* and from this misery this very minute. Just climb onto my back, blameless woman. I shall place you on my back and jump across the ocean; for I am strong enough to carry Laṅkā itself, including Rāvaṇa. This very instant, Maithilī, I shall bear you to Rāghava on Mount Prasravaṇa, just as the sacred fire bears the burnt offering to Śakra. This very moment, Vaidehī, you will see Lakṣmaṇa and also Rāghava, who is filled with the same determination that Viṣṇu had with regard to slaying the *daityas*. For with regard to finding you, that mighty man in his ashram is as full of determination as is Indra, smasher of citadels, when seated on the head of the king of elephants.

[26–29] "Please climb onto my back, my lady. Do not disdain to do so, lovely one. For you must long to be united with Rāma as much as does Rohiṇī with the hare-marked moon. Please climb on my back and traverse the sky and the sea, conversing, as it were, with the moon as does Suvarcalā

with the sun, her lord. Not one of the inhabitants of Laṅkā will be able to follow my path, lovely lady, once I set forth, taking you away from here. Just see, Vaidehī; without a doubt I shall lift you up and fly off into the sky in exactly the same fashion as I arrived."

[30–32] When Maithilī heard those astonishing words of the tawny monkey Hanumān, her every limb was filled with joy and wonder, but she replied to him: "Hanumān, how can you even think of carrying me such a great distance? I think your monkey nature is showing, leader of the troops of tawny monkeys. How can you, bull among leaping monkeys, imagine that with your tiny body you could carry me from here into the presence of my lord, the lord of men?"

[33–36] Upon hearing Sītā's words, fortunate Hanumān, son of Māruta, thought: "The first thing she does is insult me! The black-eyed lady does not know my power and my strength. Therefore, Vaidehī must see the form I can take at will." Thinking thus, Hanumān, best of leaping monkeys, crusher of his foes, began to reveal his true form to Vaidehī. Leaping down from the tree, that wise bull among monkeys began to grow in order to inspire confidence in Sītā.

[37–40] Then the bull among monkeys, resembling Mount Meru or Mount Mandara and shining with the splendor of a blazing fire, stood there before Sītā. With his red face and his fangs and claws of adamant, the fearsome and powerful tawny monkey, who resembled a mountain, said this to Vaidehī: "I am capable of carrying off all of Laṅkā, including its hilly and wooded tracts, its palaces, ramparts, and gateways, and its lord himself. Make up your mind, my lady! Give up this disdainful attitude! Vaidehī, you must free Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa from their sorrow."

[41–44] When Janaka's daughter, her wide eyes like lotus petals, saw that Māruta's flesh-and-blood son now resembled a mountain, she said to him: "Now I realize your strength and power, great monkey, your motion, which is like the wind's, and your wondrous energy like that of fire. How could any other, any ordinary being, reach this country here on the far shore of the immeasurable ocean, O bull among monkeys? I realize that you are capable of making the journey and of carrying me, but it is necessary too, that you carefully consider what might bring about the swift fulfillment of your mission.

[45–48] “It would not be appropriate for me to go with you, best of monkeys. For your speed—like that of the wind—might make me faint. Then, too, I might fall from your back in fear as you sped along up there in the sky, high up above the ocean. If I were to fall helpless into the ocean, filled with whales, sharks, and large fish, I would soon become a choice morsel for those creatures of the deep. I cannot go with you, destroyer of your enemies. For burdened with a woman, you would doubtless be placed in danger.

[49–52] “Moreover, seeing me carried off, the *rākṣasas*, fearsome in their valor, would pursue us on the orders of wicked Rāvaṇa. And surrounded by those heroic warriors, armed with lance and war hammer, you yourself, hero—burdened by a woman because of me—would be placed in danger. All those many *rākṣasas* up there in the sky would be armed, and you would be weaponless. How would you then be able both to fight them and protect me? Besides, while you were engaged in fighting with those *rākṣasas*, cruel in their actions, I might well be overcome by terror and fall from your back, best of monkeys.

[53–56] “Then again, those fearsome, huge, and powerful *rākṣasas* might somehow or other manage to defeat you in battle, best of monkeys. Or perhaps I might fall while you were looking the other way, engaged in battle. Then those wicked *rākṣasas* might catch me as I fell and take me back again. Or they might snatch me from your hands or even kill me. For victory and defeat in battle are well known to be uncertain. Then, too, under the menace of these *rākṣasas*, I might just die. In that case, best of tawny monkeys, your effort would have been fruitless.

[57–61] “Granted, you alone are capable of killing all the *rākṣasas*. But then, since you would have killed them, Rāghava’s reputation would be diminished. Then again, the *rākṣasas* might conceal me in some hidden place where neither Rāghava nor the tawny monkeys would ever find me. Your undertaking on my behalf would then have proved futile. It would be much better if Rāma were to accompany you. The very life of great Rāghava depends on me, as do the lives of his brothers and of your king’s family, great-armed one. For if Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were to lose hope of finding me, then, emaciated with pain and grief, they, as well as all the apes and tawny monkeys, would end their lives.

[62–63] “I cherish my devotion to my husband above all else, monkey. Therefore, best of monkeys, I would never willingly touch another’s body even with my foot. True, I was forced to touch the body of Rāvaṇa. But what was I to do, powerless and helpless as I was without my lord?

[64–68] “It would be more fitting for Rāma if he were to take me away from here himself after having first killed ten-necked Rāvaṇa and his *rākṣasas*. For I have both heard about and witnessed the valorous feats of that great man who crushes his foes in battle. Not even the gods, *gandharvas*, great serpents, nor *rākṣasas* are a match for Rāma in battle. Who could withstand mighty Rāghava when he is accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa and armed with his splendid bow? For blazing like a wind-whipped fire, the eater of oblations, he is equal in valor to Indra Vāsava. Who, foremost of monkeys, could withstand Rāghava, crusher of his foes in battle? For when, together with Lakṣmaṇa, he, like an earth-supporting elephant in rut, takes up his position, he resembles the sun—his arrows for rays—at the end of a cosmic era. Please bring my lord here quickly, best of monkeys, along with Lakṣmaṇa and the leaders of the monkey troops. Please, best of tawny monkeys, make me happy, for I have long been emaciated with grief over Rāma.”

Sarga 36

[1–5] When the eloquent tiger among monkeys heard the words that Sītā had spoken, he was delighted by them, and he responded to her with eloquence: “What you say is quite appropriate, lovely lady. It befits a woman’s nature and suits the modest demeanor of virtuous women. Truly, a woman is incapable of crossing the vast ocean, a hundred leagues in breadth, even by clinging on to me. And the second reason you offer, modest Jānakī, that you cannot touch any man other than Rāma, is particularly appropriate for you as the wife of that great man, my lady. What woman other than you, my lady, could utter such a speech?

[6–10] “Kākutstha shall hear without omission everything that you have said and done in my presence. I only said what I did along with its many supporting arguments out of desire to accomplish what is good for Rāma, my heart melting with love, my lady. I said it on account of the inaccessibility of Laṅkā, the virtual impossibility of crossing the great ocean, and because of my own capability. I wanted to bring you back

together with the kinsman of the Raghus immediately, and so I said all this out of love and devotion for my master and for no other reason. If you do not dare to go with me, blameless woman, then please give me some means of identification that Rāghava would recognize."

[11–13] When Sītā, who was like the daughter of the gods, had been addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, she replied in a soft voice, its syllables choked with tears: "You can tell my beloved of an incident that will serve as a perfect means of identification. It took place when I was living in the ascetics' ashram situated in the region that lies in the northeastern foothills of Mount Citrakūṭa not far from the Mandākinī River. That region is abundantly provided with roots, fruits, and water; and it is filled with the ashrams of perfected beings:

[14–17] " 'Once, after amusing myself in the parkland groves so fragrant with every kind of blossom, I sat down, dripping with water, in your lap. Then, in turn, the elder brother of Bharata fell asleep in my lap. Then a crow, hungry for flesh, pecked at me. I picked up a clod of earth and tried to drive him off. But that crow, an eater of offerings, would not go away. Greedy for food, he went on tearing at me and would not leave my flesh alone.

[18–22] " 'When, in my anger at that bird, I was trying to tighten the fastenings of my garment, you happened to see me just when my clothes had fallen open. Since you made fun of me, I was both angry and embarrassed; but since that rapacious crow was still tearing at me, I came to you. Since I was exhausted, I once more sat on your lap as you sat there. You were amused, but I was still angry, and so you mollified me. Then, my lord, you noticed that I had been angered by the crow as I sat there, my face awash with tears, slowly wiping my eyes. Breathing hard in your anger like a hissing snake, you said: "O lady whose thighs resemble an elephant's trunk, who has wounded you between your breasts? Who is toying with an enraged serpent, its jaws agape?"

[23–26] " 'Then, glancing about you, you spied that crow as he perched there watching me, his sharp claws dripping blood. They say that that crow —foremost of flying creatures, who swiftly moved about the earth and was equal to the wind in swiftness—was the son of Śakra. Rolling your eyes in anger, you, a great-armed warrior and foremost among the wise, made a harsh decision with respect to the crow. You then plucked a blade of *darbha*

grass from your mat and infused it with the power of Brahmā's divine weapon. Like the blazing fire of universal destruction, it blazed up fiercely in the bird's direction.

[27–31] " 'Then you hurled that flaming blade of grass at the crow. Pursued by it, the crow fled from one end of the earth to the other, traveling over this whole world in search of safety. Spurned by his father, all the gods, and the great seers, he traversed the triple universe before finally taking refuge with you. And as he lay there, fallen to the ground, seeking refuge with you who are fit to grant it, Kākutstha, you spared him in your compassion, although he deserved to die. Finding no shelter among all the worlds, he came to you alone for refuge. Then you said to him who had come, dejected and remorseful, to you: "The divine weapon-spell of Brahmā may never be loosed in vain. Now you tell me what is to be done." It put out the crow's right eye.

[32–36] " 'After he had made his obeisance to you and King Daśaratha, you dismissed him, and he returned to his abode. For my sake you loosed Brahmā's divine weapon-spell against a mere crow. How is it then, lord of the earth, that you are so indulgent with him who has taken me from you? Have pity on me by making a heroic effort, bull among men. It was you yourself who told me that compassion was the highest form of righteousness. I know you to be mighty, energetic, and powerful. You are as boundless, imperturbable, and unfathomable as the ocean. Indeed, you are the lord of the earth and seas, the equal of Indra Vāsava himself. Since you are the foremost master of divine weapon-spells and possess strength and power, why, Rāghava, do you not employ your divine weaponry against the *rākṣasas*?'

[37–42] "Even the great serpents, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, and the hosts of Maruts are unable to withstand the crushing force of Rāma in battle. If that mighty man has even the least concern for me, why does he not destroy the *rākṣasas* with his sharp arrows? Or else, why does not Lakṣmaṇa, the mighty and heroic scorcher of his foes, rescue me on his brother's orders? If those tigers among men, whose power is equal to that of Vāyu and Indra, are truly unassailable even by the gods, why then do they ignore me? Surely I must have committed some grave offense since those scorchers of their foes, although well able to rescue me, do not do so. On my behalf, you must bow your head and give my respectful salutation to him whom wise

Kausalyā bore to be the lord of the earth; and you must inquire as to his health.

[43–49] "On my behalf and in my own words, you must inquire about the welfare of Rāma's beloved Lakṣmaṇa, who is always so gentle, so upright, and so competent. For it was Lakṣmaṇa—in whom Sumitrā has a fine son—who renounced his garlands, all his jewels, his beloved and beautiful women, as well as the lordship—so hard to obtain—of the broad earth, and who, after honoring and propitiating his mother and father, followed Rāma. And it was he—that righteous, handsome, wise, and great-armed hero with the shoulders of a lion—who out of love gave up all pleasures and followed his brother Kākutstha in order to protect him in the forest. Heroic Lakṣmaṇa, who always treated Rāma like a father and behaved toward me as toward a mother, did not know that I was being abducted. That prince, who served his elders, is fortunate, powerful, and a man of measured speech. He is like my father-in-law himself, and he is foremost in the service of others. Indeed, Rāma's brother Lakṣmaṇa was always dearer to him than I. That mighty man bore whatever burden was placed upon him, so that whenever Rāghava would see him, he would cease to miss the old king.

[50–52] "You must repeatedly say to my heroic lord Rāma: 'I shall live only for one more month, son of Daśaratha. I cannot live beyond this month. I swear this to you by truth itself. You must rescue me, my hero, whom wicked Rāvaṇa has imprisoned through deceit, just as Kauśikī was rescued from the underworld Pātāla.' " Then, taking out an exquisite, heavenly hair ornament she had kept wrapped in her garment, Sītā gave it to Hanumān with the words, "You must give this to Rāghava."

[53–56] The heroic monkey took that unsurpassed and magnificent gem and placed it on his finger, for he could not put it on his arm. After taking that magnificent jewel, the extraordinary monkey respectfully saluted Sītā, reverently circumambulated her, and then stood humbly at her side. Filled with immense joy at having found Sītā, he stood there only with his body, for he had already traveled in his heart to Rāma. When he had taken hold of that precious and magnificent gem that the daughter of King Janaka had so cunningly concealed, Hanumān, his mind relieved like that of someone who, having been buffeted by winds on a mountaintop, was now free of them, made ready to return.

Sarga 37

[1–4] As Sītā handed the jewel to Hanumān, she said: “Here is a means of identification that Rāma can easily identify. When heroic Rāma sees this jewel, it will remind him of three people: my mother, King Daśaratha, and myself. Now, best of tawny monkeys, as you have once more been roused to action, you should consider what to do next with regard to your mission. You are the one essential actor in the prosecution of this affair, best of tawny monkeys. So it is up to you to decide what course of action will bring an end to my suffering.”

[5–11] Māruti, fearsome in his valor, promised that he would do so. Then, bowing his head to Vaidehī, he made ready to depart. Realizing that he was about to leave, the lady Maithilī, her voice choked with tears, addressed the monkey, son of Māruta the wind god: “Hanumān, you must report that I am well to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa as well as to Sugrīva, his ministers, and all the senior monkeys. You must arrange things in such a way that great-armed Rāghava will rescue me from this ocean of suffering. Hanumān, you must speak in such a way that glorious Rāma will save my life; for, by means of such a speech, you will acquire great righteousness. If Dāśarathi constantly hears from you the words I have uttered—inciting him to action—he will increase his manly efforts to get me back. When Rāghava hears the words of my message from you, that hero will duly arrange things so that his valor can be put to good use.”

[12–16] When Hanumān, son of Māruta, heard those words of Sītā, he touched his hands—cupped in reverence—to his head and said the following words: “Soon Kākutstha will come here accompanied by the foremost of the apes and tawny monkeys. After he has defeated his enemies in battle, he will put an end to your sorrow. For I know of no one among mortals, *asuras*, or even the immortal gods who would dare to stand before him when he lets fly his arrows. He is able to withstand the sun god, Parjanya the rain god, or even Vaivasvata Yama—the lord of death himself—in battle, especially if it is for your sake. He has it in mind to conquer the sea-bounded earth; and Rāma will achieve victory for your sake, delighter of Janaka.”

[17–22] When Jānakī had heard these words—so fitting, truthful, and well spoken—she highly approved of them. She honored that speech, for it was filled with love for her husband. Gazing at him over and over again as

he stood ready to depart, she spoke once more, animated by her high regard for him: “Stay another day if you please, heroic tamer of your foes. When you have rested in some concealed spot, you can depart tomorrow. If only you would stay, mighty monkey, your presence would provide hapless me a moment’s respite from my profound sorrow. For once you have departed, tiger among tawny monkeys, even if only to return, it is doubtful whether I shall survive. Have no doubt about this. My grief at not being able to see you, monkey, would only further torment me, only inflaming the sorrow of someone already stricken with sorrow after sorrow.

[23–26] “Moreover, heroic lord of the tawny monkeys, there is still one serious doubt that hovers before me regarding your allies, the apes and tawny monkeys. Just how will the troops of apes and tawny monkeys and the two sons of the best of men cross the impassable ocean? Three creatures alone possess the power to fly here over the ocean: Garuḍa Vainateya, yourself, and Māruta. Therefore, heroic monkey, what means do you foresee for accomplishing this impossible undertaking? You are the foremost of those who know how to accomplish things.

[27–30] “Granted, you are fully capable of carrying out this mission all by yourself, slayer of enemy heroes, and this accomplishment of yours would bring you glory. But only if Rāma with his entire army were to recover me after defeating Rāvaṇa in battle and then return in triumph to his own city, would my reputation be restored. And if Kākutstha, that tormentor of enemy armies, were to fill Laṅkā with his own troops and take me away, that would be worthy of him. Therefore, you must arrange it in such a way that the great battle hero demonstrates valor that is worthy of him.”

[31–35] When Hanumān had heard these meaningful, beneficial, and reasonable words, he continued with the remaining portion of his own speech: “The foremost of the leaping monkeys, Sugrīva, the mighty lord of apes and tawny monkeys, has made a firm resolve on your behalf, my lady. That nemesis of the *rākṣasas* will soon be here, accompanied by billions of monkeys, Vaidehī. The tawny monkeys under his command are imbued with valor, strength, and great power; and they move with the swiftness of thought. Their movement—upward, downward, or toward any side—cannot be impeded; and those creatures of measureless power do not shrink from even the greatest tasks.

[36–40] “Following the path of the wind, those enormously energetic creatures have many times reverently circumambulated the earth with its oceans and mountains. All the forest-dwelling monkeys are equal, if not superior, to me. Not a single one of those who attend Sugrīva is inferior to me. If I managed to get here, how much easier it will be for those who are more powerful still. After all, one does not send out the best one has to run errands. Lesser folk are sent for that purpose. So enough of this misery, my lady! Banish your grief. The leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys will reach Laṅkā in a single bound. Mounted on my back, those two immensely powerful lions among men, resembling the newly risen sun and moon, will soon come for you.

[41–45] “Once heroic Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the foremost of men, have come here, they will together destroy the city of Laṅkā with their arrows. Once Rāghava, the delight of the Raghus, has slain Rāvaṇa and his hosts, he will return to his own city, lovely woman, taking you with him. So take heart, bless you, and look forward to that time. For very soon you will see Rāma blazing like fire. Once the lord of the *rākṣasas* is killed along with his sons, ministers, and kinsmen, you will be reunited with Rāma, as is Rohiṇī with the hare-marked moon. Soon, my lady Maithilī, you will reach the end of your sorrow. Very shortly you will see Rāvaṇa struck down by Rāma.”

[46–49] Thus did Hanumān, the son of Māruta, comfort Vaidehī. Then, turning his thoughts to his departure, he once more addressed Vaidehī: “You will soon see Rāghava, an accomplished slayer of his foes, and you will also see Lakṣmaṇa standing at the gates of Laṅkā, bow in hand. Soon you will see those heroic monkeys assembled here as well. Their weapons are their fangs and claws, their valor is that of lions and tigers, and they resemble elephant lords. My lady, you will see countless troops of those extraordinary monkeys, like clouds upon a mountain, roaring on the peaks of Laṅkā’s Mount Malaya.

[50–53] “For Rāma, pierced to the vitals by the fearsome arrow of Manmatha, the god of love, can no more find peace than can an elephant harried by a lion. So you must not weep in grief, my lady. Don’t let your heart be sad. For in your husband you have such a protector as does Śacī in her lord Śakra. Who is greater than Rāma? Who is the equal of Saumitri? It is those two brothers, like Agni and Māruta, who are your refuge. You will not have to remain very long now, my lady, in this savage land, infested by

hosts of *rākṣasas*. It won't be long now before the coming of your beloved. Just be patient until the moment when I meet him."

Sarga 38

[1–5] When Sītā, who was like a daughter of the gods, had heard the words of the great son of the wind god, she replied to him in words addressed to her own interest: "I am as refreshed at seeing you, sweet-spoken monkey, as is the earth—its crops half grown—on receiving rain. Please act with such kindness toward me that I, so full of love, may once more touch that tiger among men with these limbs, wasted with grief. Please, foremost of the hosts of tawny monkeys, give this means of identification to Rāma and remind him of the blade of grass he hurled at the crow in his anger—taking out one of its eyes—and say: 'You must surely remember the *tilaka* mark of red mineral powder that you placed on my forehead when my regular *tilaka* mark had been rubbed off.

[6–11] " 'How can you, who are as mighty as great Indra or Varuṇa, tolerate the abduction of Sītā and her living among the *rākṣasas*? In looking at this heavenly hair ornament, which I have guarded so carefully, I have experienced as much joy in my affliction as if I had been gazing upon you yourself, my blameless lord. I am sending you this splendid jewel, born of the sea. Now filled with the bitter yearning of grief, I cannot go on living. It is only for your sake that I have endured these unbearable torments and the bloodcurdling words of the terrible *rākṣasa* women. I shall live for only one more month, subduer of your foes; beyond that month I cannot live without you, son of the king. The king of the *rākṣasas* is dreadful, and the way he looks at me is far from pleasant. If I should learn that something had happened to you, I could not live another moment.' "

[12–17] When powerful Hanumān, son of Māruta, had heard those piteous words that Vaidehī had spoken so tearfully, he said: "I swear to you, my lady, that Rāma is distracted in his grief for you. With Rāma overwhelmed with grief, Lakṣmaṇa too is suffering. Still, somehow or other, I have found you. So this is not the time to grieve. Lovely woman, in a very short time, you will see the end of your sorrows. The two princes, those blameless tigers among men, making every effort to find you, will reduce Laṅkā to ashes. The two Rāghavas will slay cruel Rāvaṇa and all his kinsmen in battle and then take you to their own city, wide-eyed lady. But

please, blameless lady, give me some additional means of identification that Rāma will recognize and that will bring him still greater joy."

[18–19] She replied: "But Hanumān, I have already given you a perfect means of identification: my hair ornament. Once Rāma sees it, he will believe what you tell him, heroic monkey." Majestic Hanumān, foremost among the leaping monkeys, took that superb jewel; then, bowing his head to the lady, he prepared to depart.

[20–24] As she watched that immensely powerful bull among tawny monkeys increasing his size as he gathered his strength to leap, Jānakī, dejected, her face awash with tears, spoke to him in a voice choked with tears: "Hanumān, you must inform those lionlike brothers as well as Sugrīva, his ministers, and all the monkeys that I am well. You must arrange things in such a way that great-armed Rāghava will rescue me from this ocean of suffering. When you see Rāma, you must tell him of the terrible, crushing force of my grief and about the threats of the *rākṣasas*. May you have a safe journey, heroic tawny monkey." The monkey was delighted at heart to receive the princess's message, for he had accomplished his purpose. Then, reflecting that some small thing still remained to be done, he traveled north in his heart.

Sarga 39

[1–6] Honored by her with words of praise, the monkey set forth, but as he left that spot, he began to think: "I have found the black-eyed lady. But some small thing still remains to be done. In this case, aside from the first three strategies, the fourth alone presents itself. Conciliation does not yield good results in the case of *rākṣasas*, nor are gifts appropriate in the case of those who have amassed great wealth. Dissension can have no effect on people who are proud of their strength. Physical force alone presents itself to me in this case. Indeed, no resolution other than physical force will be possible in this matter. However, if a few of their champions were to be killed somehow or other in battle right now, then the *rākṣasas* might be made more pliant. If a person who is entrusted with a specific mission accomplishes other things without compromising his principal mission, then that person is truly worthy of undertaking such a mission. Many means must be undertaken to accomplish even the most trivial task. And only he

who understands this multiplicity of means is truly capable of effectively accomplishing his purpose.

[7–12] "If now, having accomplished my primary objective, I could make a clear determination of the strength of the enemy's forces compared to our own before returning to the home of the lord of leaping monkeys, I would then have fully carried out my master's orders. How can I most easily start a violent battle right now between the *rākṣasas* and myself so that ten-faced Rāvaṇa will throw his most powerful forces against me in combat? Here is a grove belonging to that vicious monster. It is magnificent, and it resembles Indra's Nandana grove itself. For it is delightful to the eye and the heart, and it is filled with every sort of tree and climbing vine. I shall destroy it as thoroughly as a fire destroys a dry forest. When it has been devastated, Rāvaṇa will be furious. Then the lord of the *rākṣasas* will send forth a great army equipped with tridents and iron spears and including cavalry, chariots, and elephants. There will be a huge battle. When I meet in battle with those *rākṣasas*, fierce in their valor, I will destroy the force sent forth by Rāvaṇa, for my valor is unstoppable. Then, I can easily proceed to the abode of the monkey king."

[13–17] Then Māruti, furious and terrifying in his valor, began to smash down the trees with the enormous force of his thighs like a raging gale. In this fashion, heroic Hanumān devastated the ladies' park, which was teeming with impassioned birds and filled with every kind of tree and climbing vine. Once its trees had been smashed, its ponds ruined, and the crests of its hills ground to dust, that grove looked most unpleasant. Its vine-covered pavilions and its picture galleries wrecked, its great serpents, wild animals, and deer scattered, and its grottoes and cottages torn down, that extensive grove was utterly ruined. Once the great monkey had done this thing—so unwelcome to the mind of that great king—he stationed himself, blazing with splendor, at the gateway, eager to do battle all alone against many powerful foes.

Sarga 40

[1–4] At the shrieking of birds and the sound of trees being smashed, all the inhabitants of Laṅkā grew frantic with fear. Terrified beasts and birds fled screeching, and dire omens appeared to the *rākṣasas*. Their sleep disturbed, the *rākṣasa* women with their hideous faces saw the devastated grove and

the great and heroic monkey. Seeing them, the great-armed monkey, whose power and strength were enormous, took on a colossal form that terrified the *rākṣasa* women.

[5–7] When the *rākṣasa* women saw the mighty monkey with his huge body resembling a mountain, they asked the daughter of Janaka: "Who is that? Whose is he? Where is he from? Why has he come here? Why were you talking with him? Tell us, fortunate and wide-eyed woman, you need have no fear. Why was he talking with you, black-eyed lady?"

[8–10] But virtuous Sītā, whose every limb was lovely, only said: "How should I know anything about these *rākṣasas*, who change their form at will? You are the ones who ought to know who he is and what he is going to do! Without a doubt, no one but a snake knows how a snake walks. I too am afraid of him! I don't know who he is. Who is he? I thought some *rākṣasa*, who could change his form at will, had come here."

[11–16] When the *rākṣasa* women heard Vaidehī's words, they quickly split up. Some remained there, while others went to report the matter to Rāvaṇa. The *rākṣasa* women with their hideous faces approached Rāvaṇa and began to tell him about the fearsome and hideous monkey: "Your majesty, a monkey with a fearsome body and immeasurable strength was talking with Sītā in the middle of the *aśoka* grove. But although we questioned doe-eyed Sītā Jānakī intensively, she would not tell us anything about that tawny monkey. He may be a messenger of Indra Vāsava or of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa. He might even have been sent by Rāma in his eagerness to search for Sītā. With his marvelous form, he has utterly devastated your charming ladies' park, all filled with flocks of different animals.

[17–21] "Apart from the place where Sītā is, there is no part of it that he has not destroyed. We don't understand whether this was in order to spare Sītā or simply because he got tired. But then, how could such a creature tire? He must have spared her intentionally. For he has spared the big *śiṃśapā* tree—the one filled with beautiful sprouts and blossoms—where Sītā always stays. You must order a harsh punishment for this fierce creature who has conversed with Sītā and destroyed the grove. Who, lord of the *rākṣasa* hosts, would dare speak to Sītā, whom you have already married in your heart, unless it be someone who wishes to die?"

[22–25] When Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, heard the words of the *rākṣasa* women, rolling his eyes in rage, he flared up like the sacrificial fire

when oblations are made. The immensely powerful lord then commanded a company of *rākṣasas* called the *kiṃkaras*—heroes like himself—to capture Hanumān. Eighty thousand swift *kiṃkaras*, armed with mallets and war hammers, poured out of the palace. They had huge bellies and enormous fangs; their appearance was frightful, and their strength was great. They were all eager for battle and intent on capturing Hanumān.

[26–30] When they came upon the monkey sitting on the gateway, they rushed toward him with tremendous speed, like moths toward a flame. They assaulted that outstanding monkey with various maces, gold-banded clubs of iron, and arrows blazing like the sun. But majestic and powerful Hanumān, who looked like a mountain, beat his tail on the ground and let loose a mighty roar. As they gazed upon Hanumān—towering above them like a great cloud at sunset—the sound of his bellowing filled them with fear and apprehension. But putting aside their apprehension because of their master's command, the *rākṣasas* attacked the monkey from all sides with various terrifying weapons.

[31–36] Completely surrounded by those mighty warriors, powerful Hanumān seized a fearsome iron beam that was attached to the gateway. Grasping that beam and belaboring the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, he resembled Garuḍa, son of Vinatā, when he seizes a writhing serpent. Then heroic Māruti flew through the sky, wielding the beam. After killing the *kiṃkara rākṣasas*, the heroic son of Māruta, still eager for battle, perched himself once more on the gateway. A few of the *rākṣasas* who had stood apart in their terror of him reported to Rāvaṇa that all the *kiṃkaras* had been slain. When the king learned that that mighty company of *rākṣasas* had been destroyed, he rolled his eyes in rage and sent forth Prahasta's son, who was unequaled in valor and invincible in battle.

Sarga 41

[1–4] When Hanumān had slain the *kiṃkaras*, he fell to thinking: "I have devastated the grove, but I have not destroyed its domed palace. Therefore, I shall destroy this palace in the same fashion." Reflecting thus in his mind, Hanumān exhibited his strength in leaping to the top of the domed palace, as lofty as the summit of Mount Meru. Thus did the foremost of tawny monkeys Hanumān, son of Māruta, ascend. When the invincible monkey, blazing with splendor, had scaled that lofty domed palace, he resembled

Mount Pāriyātra. Taking on a colossal form, Hanumān, son of Māruta, clapped his upper arms in challenge; and the sound of it filled Laṅkā.

[5–9] At the great and deafening sound of that clapping, birds fell from the sky. Then, in a loud voice, he proclaimed: "Victory to the champion Rāma and to mighty Lakṣmaṇa! Victory to King Sugrīva whom Rāghava protects! I am a servant of Rāma, the lord of Kosala, who is tireless in action. I am Hanumān, son of Māruta, and the destroyer of enemy armies. Once I start hurling thousands of boulders and trees, not even a thousand Rāvaṇas could make a force strong enough to oppose me in battle. I shall devastate the city of Laṅkā and reverentially salute Maithilī. Then, my mission accomplished, I shall depart under the very noses of the *rākṣasas*."

[10–14] When that bull among tawny monkeys, perched on that palace, had spoken in this fashion to the palace guards, he bellowed with a dreadful sound, terrifying the *rākṣasas*. At that tremendous sound, a hundred huge palace guards issued forth holding various weapons—darts, swords, and battle-axes—and surrounded Māruti. A huge host of *rākṣasas* swirled around that best of tawny monkeys, like a great whirlpool in the waters of the Ganges. At that, the son of the wind god grew furious and took on a fearsome form. Great and mighty Hanumān, son of Māruta, forcibly ripped out one of the palace's columns—all inlaid with gold—and whirled that hundred-edged weapon about him.

[15–18] Once he had slain the hundred *rākṣasas*, as Indra slew the *asuras* with his *vajra*, the majestic monkey, high in the air, said these words: "Thousands of huge and powerful monkey lords—just like me—have been sent forth, obedient to the command of Sugrīva. Sugrīva will come here with hundreds, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and even tens of millions of such monkeys to slaughter you all. Since you have locked yourselves in enmity with the great lord of the Ikṣvākus, you, Rāvaṇa, and the city of Laṅkā are doomed."

Sarga 42

[1–5] Then, at the command of the *rākṣasa* lord, Prahasta's mighty son, huge-fanged Jambumālin, went forth wielding his bow. His garments and garlands were red; he wore a floral chaplet and splendid earrings. He was huge and fierce. His eyes were rolling wildly, and he was invincible in battle. He went forth with his huge bow—resembling the bow of Śakra—

and its splendid arrows. As he twanged it with great force, its sound was like that of a thunderclap. The deafening sound of that great bow's twanging filled the heavens and all directions at once. When Hanumān, endowed with tremendous force, saw him approaching in a chariot drawn by donkeys, he was delighted and he roared.

[6–10] Then, with his keen arrows, great-armed Jambumālin struck the great monkey Hanumān, who stood on top of the gateway. He struck the monkey lord in the face with a half-moon-headed arrow, in the head with a barbed arrow, and in the arms with ten arrows of iron. Struck by that arrow, his face, which was naturally red, looked like a red lotus in full bloom struck by the rays of the autumnal sun, bringer of light. Struck by the arrows of the *rākṣasa*, the great monkey was enraged. Then he spied an enormous boulder lying beside him. Tearing it loose with tremendous force, the mighty monkey hurled it with all his might. But the *rākṣasa*, likewise enraged, smashed it with ten arrows.

[11–14] When mighty Hanumān, whose power was so fierce, saw that his effort had failed, he uprooted a *sāla* tree and whirled it about him. Mighty Jambumālin, seeing the mighty monkey whirling the *sāla* tree about him, fired off a huge number of arrows. He cut that *sāla* tree to pieces with four arrows and hit the monkey with five more in the arm. With a single arrow he struck him in the chest and in the hollow of the chest with ten more. His body full of arrows, Hanumān was filled with a towering rage; and, seizing that same iron beam, he flailed it about him violently.

[15–19] Whirling the beam with tremendous speed, the monkey, whose speed was tremendous and who was filled with the intoxication of his strength, brought it down on Jambumālin's mighty chest. His head, his arms, his knees, his bow, his chariot, his donkeys, even his arrows were completely obliterated. Struck with such violence, the great chariot-warrior Jambumālin fell to the ground, his limbs and ornaments reduced to dust. When Rāvaṇa learned that Jambumālin as well as the mighty *kiṃkaras* had been slain, he was furious and his eyes grew red with rage. When the mighty son of Prahasta had been killed, the lord of night-roaming *rākṣasas*, his eyes red and rolling with rage, immediately ordered out his minister's sons, who were endowed with tremendous strength and valor.

Sarga 43

[1–5] Urged on by the lord of the *rākṣasas*, the seven sons of his minister, shining with the radiance of the seven-flamed fire, went forth from the palace. They were mighty and armed with bows, and they were accompanied by a vast army. They were masters of divine weapons—the foremost among such masters—and each was eager to surpass the others. They were mounted in huge chariots with golden trappings, covered with flagstaffs and pennants, and drawn by horses. They made a sound like the thunder of storm clouds. Twanging their bows—resplendent with burnished gold—those immeasurably powerful warriors in their excitement looked like storm clouds shot with lightning. But their mothers as well as their friends and kinsmen, who knew that the *kiṃkaras* had been killed, were frantic with grief.

[6–10] Bedecked with ornaments of burnished gold, each one trying to outrun the others, they rushed at Hanumān, who stood his ground on the gateway. Releasing showers of arrows, their chariots making deep rumbling sounds, those bulls among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, charging, resembled storm clouds pouring torrents. Covered by those showers of arrows, Hanumān's form became obscured like that of a mighty mountain in a torrential downpour. Moving swiftly, the monkey managed to evade both the arrows and the chariot charges of those mighty warriors as he raced through the clear sky. Toying with those bowmen in the sky, mighty Hanumān resembled Lord Māruta, the wind god, playing with rainbow-crossed clouds in the heavens.

[11–16] Then, with a mighty roar that terrified that vast army, mighty Hanumān charged the *rākṣasas*. That scorcher of his foes struck some of them with his open hand; others he kicked with his feet; still others he hit with his fist, while he rent others with his claws. The monkey smashed some of his enemies with his chest, others with his thighs, while he knocked still others to the ground with the sound of his roaring alone. After they had all fallen to the ground, dead, their whole mighty army, panic-stricken, fled in all directions. Elephants trumpeted discordantly. Horses fell to the ground. The earth was littered with chariots—their seats, flagstaffs, and parasols shattered. When the mighty and heroic monkey, fierce in his valor, had slain those arrogant *rākṣasas*, he returned to the gateway, eager to fight more of them.

Sarga 44

[1–4] When Rāvaṇa learned that his minister's sons had been slain by the great monkey, he formulated a new plan, keeping his feelings well hidden. Then ten-necked Rāvaṇa issued the following orders to his five field marshals—Virūpākṣa, Yūpākṣa, the *rākṣasa* Durdhara, Praghasa, and Bhāsakarṇa—all of whom were powerful, skilled in political strategy, impetuous as the wind in battle, and eager to capture Hanumān: "Go forth, all you field marshals, and take a large corps of cavalry, chariots, and elephants with you. You must defeat that monkey.

[5–8] "But you must be very careful when you confront this forest creature, and you must adopt strategies that are appropriate to the time and place. Judging by what he has done, I think that this is no monkey! By all means, he must be some great being, endowed with tremendous strength. Or else Indra must have created him through the power of his asceticism in order to destroy us. Together, all of you and I have conquered the gods, *asuras*, and great seers along with the great serpents, *yakṣas*, and *gandharvas*. It is inevitable that they will try to cause us some trouble. Undoubtedly, that is what this is. You must seize him by force.

[9–14] "And you should not underestimate this tawny monkey of fierce valor. For I have seen swift and exceedingly valorous monkeys before—tawny monkeys such as Vālin, Sugrīva, mighty Jāmbavān, General Nīla, and others, such as Dvivida and the rest. But even they did not have such awesome speed, power, valor, cunning, endurance, and the ability to change form at will. You must understand that this is some great being who has taken on the appearance of a monkey. Therefore, you must make an extraordinary effort if you are to vanquish him. I grant you that the inhabitants of all the three worlds—including Indra, the gods, the *asuras*, and mortals—would be insufficient to stand against you on the battlefield. Still, a person skilled in strategy who desires victory in battle will make every effort to protect himself; for success in battle is fickle."

[15–19] Accepting their master's instructions, all those swift and mighty generals, whose splendor equaled that of Agni, eater of oblations, set forth. They were amply provided with chariots, rutting war-elephants, swift horses, and all manner of troops and sharp weapons. Then those mighty warriors spied the great monkey, who, garlanded with the rays of his own splendor, was blazing like the rising sun. Great in speed, power, strength,

cunning, energy, size, and ability, he sat there on the gateway. The moment they saw him, they positioned themselves all around him and then attacked him from every side with all manner of fearsome weapons.

[20–26] Durdhara struck him in the head with five bright iron arrows. Sharp and yellow tipped, they resembled lotus petals. Pierced in the head by those five arrows, the monkey leapt into the air roaring, so that he made the directions resound. Mounted in his chariot, powerful and valiant Durdhara advanced with his bow at the ready, showering him with many hundreds of arrows. The monkey drove him off as he showered his arrows into the air, just as the wind god Māruta drives back a storm cloud with its showers at the end of the rainy season. Harried by Durdhara, the swift son of the wind god roared and began to grow once more. Suddenly leaping high into the air, the tawny monkey fell with tremendous force onto Durdhara's chariot like a great bolt of lightning upon a mountain. Abandoning his chariot, its eight horses killed, its axle and shaft splintered, Durdhara fell to the ground and yielded up his life.

[27–30] When unassailable Virūpākṣa and Yūpākṣa, subduers of their foes, saw him fallen to the ground, they were filled with fury and leapt to the attack. And as they leapt to the attack, they both struck the great-armed monkey on the chest with war hammers as he stood there in the clear sky. Bearing the brunt of the full force of those forceful *rākṣasas*, the mighty monkey, equal in valor to Suparṇa, leapt once more to the ground. The monkey son of Pavana the wind god rushed to a *sāla* tree and, tearing it up by its roots, slew both of those mighty *rākṣasas*.

[31–35] Then, realizing that the three of them had been killed by the swift tawny monkey, exceedingly powerful Praghasa attacked him. Mighty Bhāsakarṇa in a rage seized his lance. Then the two of them—side by side—faced the glorious tiger among monkeys. Praghasa attacked the best of monkeys with his sharp-tipped lance, as did the *rākṣasa* Bhāsakarṇa with his lance. His limbs wounded by the two of them and his fur smeared with blood, that monkey equaled the newly risen sun in radiance. He was filled with fury. Hanumān, mighty elephant among monkeys, then tore off a mountain peak along with its deer, beasts of prey, and trees, and killed the two *rākṣasas*.

[36–39] Once he had killed those five generals, the monkey destroyed the remainder of their armies. The monkey destroyed them as did thousand-

eyed Indra the *asuras*, smashing horses with horses, elephants with elephants, warriors with warriors, and chariots with chariots. The roads of the countryside all around were blocked with slain elephants and horses, slaughtered *rākṣasas*, and great chariots with their axles splintered. After the mighty monkey had slain the mighty field marshals in battle along with their troops and mounts, he returned to the gateway for a moment's respite, like Kāla after the destruction of all creatures.

Sarga 45

[1–6] When the king learned that Hanumān had slaughtered his five field marshals along with their followers and mounts, he cast his glance upon Prince Akṣa, who had never suffered a wound and was eager and ready for battle. Prompted by that glance, the valorous prince sprang up with his gold-inlaid bow in the assembly hall, like the purifying sacrificial fire flaring up through the oblation poured by eminent twice-born brahmans. Mounting his great chariot, which—with its spreading fretwork of burnished *jāmbūnada* gold—shone with the splendor of the newly risen sun, maker of day, that mighty bull among *rākṣasas*, the sons of chaos, went forth against the great tawny monkey. His chariot was adorned with burnished *jāmbūnada* gold. It was covered with pennants, and its flagstaff was adorned with gems. It was splendidly yoked with eight fine horses, swift as thought. He had won it by long application to ascetic practice. It was unassailable by either gods or *asuras*, and its passage could not be impeded. It was fully equipped, and it moved through the air with the splendor of the sun. With quivers and eight swords fastened in place, it looked beautiful. It had javelins and iron cudgels arrayed in rows. Gleaming with every accoutrement, its golden ropes as brilliant as the moon and sun, maker of day, the chariot resembled the sun itself. Mounting it, that prince, whose valor was equal to that of the gods, set forth.

[7–11] Filling the sky and the earth—along with all its mountains—with the sound of his horses, elephants, and great chariot, the prince, accompanied by his troops, approached the powerful monkey as he sat on the gateway. Approaching the seated monkey—like the fire of universal destruction at the end of the cosmic era when all creatures are destroyed—Akṣa, his glance that of a lion, was both amazed and apprehensive. He stared at him with a respectful gaze. Assessing the great monkey's power

and his valor when confronted with enemies, as well as his own strength, the mighty son of the king summoned all his strength, as does the sun at winter's end. As he reflected on his valor, he was roused to fury. Then, steadfast and of focused mind, he took up his position and incited Hanumān, invincible in battle, to combat with three sharp arrows. Grasping his bow and with arrow in hand, high-spirited Akṣa gazed upon the haughty monkey and saw that he had banished all fatigue and was revitalized for the conquest of his foes.

[12–15] Swift in his valor, wearing a golden necklace and armlets and beautiful earrings, he attacked the monkey. Then an incomparable struggle between the two of them took place, frightening even the gods and *asuras*. Witnessing that battle between the monkey and the prince, the earth cried out, the sun grew dim, the winds ceased to blow, the mountains shook, the heavens thundered, and the oceans seethed. Then the mighty warrior, adept at aiming, nocking, and loosing his arrows, struck the monkey's head with three swift and fair-faced arrows fletched with gold and resembling venomous serpents. Bleeding from those arrows that had struck him in the head simultaneously, the monkey, covered with his own blood, his eyes rolling, resembled the newly risen sun. With those arrows protruding like rays, he looked like the ray-garlanded sun.

[16–19] Observing the son of the great king with his splendid bow and weapons raised in battle, the foremost minister of the king of the monkeys rejoiced and began to increase in size in his eagerness for combat. In his towering fury, filled with power and strength, he resembled the ray-garlanded sun when it touches the peak of Mount Mandara. Then he began to consume Prince Akṣa along with his troops and mounts with the flames issuing from his fiery eyes. Then that *rākṣasa*, Akṣa, in the form of a storm cloud—his bow in place of Indra's rainbow and his arrows in place of torrents—swiftly loosed his arrows in battle against that lord of tawny monkeys, who looked like a mountain, just as a storm cloud releases its torrents upon a great mountain. Observing Prince Akṣa with his fierce valor in battle and his great power, strength, energy, and arrows in battle, the monkey, whose power was equal to that of a thundercloud, roared with delight.

[20–24] In his youthfulness and overconfidence in his own prowess, the prince, his eyes red as blood, rushed in a towering fury upon that monkey,

who was unequaled in combat. He was like a bull elephant rushing toward a vast pitfall concealed by grass. Struck by the arrows that the prince loosed with such force, Māruti roared with a sound like a storm cloud thundering and leapt into the sky, looking dreadful through the flailing of his arms and legs. But even as he leapt upward, the mighty and valorous leader of the *rākṣasas*, foremost of chariot-warriors, pursued him in his chariot, showering him with arrows, as a storm cloud does a mountain with showers of hailstones. Nevertheless, the mighty monkey, whose valor was fearsome in battle, moved along the path traveled by the wind, dodging his arrows. He moved like the wind itself, swift as thought, among the arrows. Observing Akṣa with an admiring glance as, bow in hand and eager for battle, he covered the sky with all kinds of splendid missiles, the son of Māruta fell to thinking.

[25–29] His chest pierced with arrows by that great and outstanding prince, the great-armed monkey, knowing full well how extraordinary was this feat, roared and reflected on Akṣa's prowess in battle: "This mighty warrior, whose radiance is that of the newly risen sun, maker of day, has performed a magnificent feat quite unlike that of a youngster. I do not care to kill one who is so splendid in every exploit of battle. This great warrior is truly great in battle and in valor. He is well focused and can withstand anything in combat. There is no doubt that the sages as well as *yakṣas* and great serpents honor him for the ever-increasing excellence of his feats in battle. His spirit exalted by his valor and energy, he stands directly before me and sizes me up. Indeed, the valor of this impetuous warrior might well cause the hearts of even the gods and *asuras* to quail. If I do not take him seriously, he will surely get the better of me, for his valor in battle is increasing. I have really no choice but to kill him, for one cannot ignore a spreading fire."

[30–33] Reflecting thus on the power of his foe and settling his own plan of action, the great monkey, valorous and powerful, rushed forward, resolved to kill him. There in the path traveled by the wind, the mighty monkey son of Pavana the wind god slew Akṣa's eight swift steeds—well trained in maneuvering and able to bear heavy loads—with blows of his palm. Next Akṣa's great chariot, struck with the palm of the minister of the king of the monkeys, fell from the sky in defeat, its seat smashed, its shaft detached, and its horses slain. Abandoning his chariot, the great chariot-

warrior, armed with his bow and sword, flew up into the sky, just as a seer who has acquired fearsome power through the practice of asceticism might leave his body and rise up to the abode of the gods.

[34–39] But the monkey, whose speed and power were like those of Māruta, gradually caught up with him as he moved through the sky—frequented by Garuḍa, king of birds, the wind god Anila, and perfected beings—and seized him firmly by his feet. Whirling him around thousands of times as Garuḍa, the lord of birds, might whirl a great snake he had seized, the foremost of monkeys, his father's equal in power, hurled him forcefully to the ground in battle. Slain by the son of Vāyu, the *rākṣasa* fell to the earth. His arms, thighs, hips, and neck were broken; he was oozing blood; his bones and eyes were mutilated. His joints were separated and his tendons strewn about. In crushing him against the ground, the great monkey greatly terrified the lord of the *rākṣasas*. When the prince had been slain, the great seers—who follow the orbits of the heavenly bodies and rigidly observe their vows—celestial beings, *yakṣas* and great serpents, and the gods along with Indra who had assembled there gazed upon the monkey with great awe. When the mighty monkey had slain Prince Akṣa of the bloodred eyes, whose splendor was like that of the son of Indra, wielder of the *vajra*, he returned to the gateway for a moment's respite like Kāla after the destruction of all creatures.

Sarga 46

[1–6] When Prince Akṣa had been slain by Hanumān, Rāvaṇa, the great lord of the *rākṣasas*, steadied his mind. Then, in his anger, he issued orders to Indrajit, who was like Indra himself, saying: "You are an expert in divine weapons and are foremost among those who bear weapons. You have brought great sorrow upon even the gods and *asuras*. Your exploits have been witnessed by Indra and the gods, and you have amassed divine weapons by propitiating Grandfather Brahmā. After experiencing the power of your divine weapons in battle, neither the *asuras* nor the hosts of Maruts nor anyone else in all the three worlds has escaped affliction. You are protected by the strength of your own arms and guarded by the power of your austerities. You fully understand all distinctions of time and place, and you are highly intelligent. There is nothing you cannot accomplish through your exploits in battle; there is nothing you cannot accomplish through your

wise counsel. No one in all the three worlds is ignorant of your native strength and the strength of your divine weapons. The power of your austerities, your valor in battle, and the power of your divine weapons are equal to my own. Thus, when I think of you in the press of battle, my mind, assured of attaining its object, does not despair.

[7–12] "All the *kiṃkaras* have been slain and so have my five field marshals, the mighty sons of my minister, and the *rākṣasa* Jambumālin. Your beloved brother Prince Akṣa has been slain as well. But in none of them did I place the trust I place in you, subduer of your foes. Observing this monkey's great strength—so cunningly employed—his power, and his valor, and considering your own strength, you must exert force commensurate with your own power. You are the foremost of experts in divine weapons; reflecting on your own strength and that of your enemy, you must act in such a way that when you leave here and encounter him, destroyer of your foes, the destruction of our forces will be avoided. It is not really the best of strategies for me to send you out, but it is one that is sanctioned by warriors who follow the prescribed rules of royal statecraft. During the battle you must remember your expertise in the various weapons, subduer of your foes, and you must truly desire victory in battle."

[13–16] When he had heard his father's words, that warrior—his power like that of the gods, the sons of Dakṣa, and his courage unfailing—reverently circumambulated his lord and prepared his mind for battle. Then Indrajit set forth to war, filled with energy, eager for battle, and greatly honored by his dear companions. The majestic son of the *rākṣasa* king, his eyes like lotus petals, set forth, overflowing with energy like the sea on the days of spring tide. Like Indra himself, Indrajit mounted his chariot. Unstoppable, it was yoked with four lions with sharp, white fangs. They were matched in their paces and swift as Garuḍa, the king of birds.

[17–21] Mounted in his chariot, the great chariot-warrior, foremost of bowmen, master of weapons, and the best of those familiar with divine weapons, proceeded swiftly to the place where Hanumān was. The heroic tawny monkey was overjoyed when he heard the rumbling of his chariot and the twanging of his bowstring. Adept in battle, Indrajit, holding his enormous bow and keen-tipped arrows, advanced toward Hanumān. As he set forth for battle, arrows in hand, eager for combat, the directions all grew dark, and fierce beasts cried out in different voices. Then the great seers,

who follow the orbits of the heavenly bodies, along with the great serpents, *yakṣas*, and perfected beings, assembled there, as did flocks of birds, covering the sky and crying in great delight.

[22–26] Seeing Indrajit swiftly approaching in his chariot, the powerful monkey let loose a mighty roar and grew still larger. But Indrajit, mounted in his heavenly chariot, armed with his magnificent bow, made his weapon resound with a roar as loud as a thunderbolt. Then the two of them—the monkey and the son of the *rākṣasa* lord—met. Both were immensely powerful, both enormously strong, and both fearless in battle. They were as fixed in their enmity as are the great gods and *asuras*. As he moved along the path of his father the wind god, immeasurable Hanumān, grown to an enormous size, evaded the impact of the arrows of that mighty chariot-warrior and bowman honored in battle. Meanwhile, Indrajit, the mighty slayer of enemy heroes, loosed long, splendidly feathered arrows with sharp and broad heads and nocked with gold. Their impact was like that of the *vajra*.

[27–29] Hearing the rumbling sound of his chariot, the beating of the battle drums—*mṛdaṅgas*, *bherīs*, and *paṭahas*—and the sound of his bow being drawn, Hanumān leapt up once more. The great, tawny monkey sped through the spaces between that celebrated marksman's arrows, spoiling his aim. Sometimes Hanumān, son of the wind god, would stand directly in front of his arrows only to stretch out his arms and leap out of the way.

[30–36] The two of them, both endowed with enormous power and adept in feats of battle, waged a magnificent duel that enthralled the minds of all creatures. The *rākṣasa* could find no opening on Hanumān's part nor could Māruti find any on the part of that great warrior. And so, when the two of them—their valor equal to that of the gods—met, they found each other equally invincible. Since his arrows—even when they hit their mark—were falling in vain, the great warrior focused his thoughts in deep concentration and fell to brooding. The son of the *rākṣasa* king came to a decision concerning the foremost among the heroic tawny monkeys. Realizing that it was impossible to kill him, he thought: "How might the monkey be rendered immobile so that he can be captured?" The enormously powerful hero, foremost of experts in divine weapon-spells, then directed the divine weapon of Grandfather Brahmā toward that best of tawny monkeys. Recognizing that it was impossible to kill him, great-armed Indrajit, who

knew the science of divine weapons, captured the son of Māruta with his divine weapon. Once the *rākṣasa* had bound him with that divine weapon-spell, the monkey was immobilized and he fell to the ground.

[37–42] Realizing that he was bound by a divine weapon—although he felt not even the slightest pain through the power of the Lord—that heroic tawny monkey then recalled the grace that had been shown him by Grandfather Brahmā. Recognizing that this was Brahmā's divine weapon, invoked with spells belonging to that self-existent god, Hanumān recalled the boon he had been granted by Grandfather Brahmā, thinking: "Because of the power of Brahmā, father of the worlds, I am unable to free myself from the bondage of this divine weapon. Indeed, it is incumbent upon me to submit to the bondage of the self-existent god's divine weapon when it is used in such a fashion." Reflecting upon the power of that divine weapon and on the kindness Grandfather Brahmā had shown him, and considering that he would momentarily be able to free himself, the monkey submitted to the will of the Grandfather, thinking: "Even though I am bound by this divine weapon, I feel no fear, for I am under the protection of Grandfather Brahmā, great Indra, and the wind god. Moreover, I foresee one great advantage in my being taken by the *rākṣasas*: a parley with their lord. So let my enemies capture me."

[43–48] Having resolved this matter after due consideration, the slayer of enemy heroes kept perfectly still. But he roared as the various foes who now rushed upon him seized him violently and reviled him. Seeing that subduer of his foes immobilized, the *rākṣasas* bound him with ropes of hemp and stout strips of bark. Hanumān submitted to this violent capture and bondage at the hands of his powerful enemies, having concluded that the lord of the *rākṣasas* would desire to see him out of curiosity. The moment that mighty monkey was bound with strips of bark, he was released by the divine weapon, for the bondage of divine weapon-spells cannot coexist with any other bondage. As soon as mighty Indrajit realized that the best of monkeys, now bound with strips of bark, had been released by the divine weapon, he began to worry, even though the monkey, now bound by other means, still seemed to be under the power of the divine weapon, thinking: "Alas! My great feat has been rendered futile. The *rākṣasas* have not taken into consideration the way these *mantras* work. Once a divine

weapon has been counteracted, no other can be deployed. We are all in grave peril."

[49–54] But Hanumān did not realize that he had been released by the divine weapon. And so, tormented by his bonds, he was dragged along by the *rākṣasas*. Beating the monkey with sticks and fists, the cruel *rākṣasas* dragged him into the presence of their lord. Then Indrajit, realizing that the heroic and powerful tawny monkey had been freed from the divine weapon, showed him—bound as he was with strips of bark—to the king and his courtiers. The *rākṣasas* then began to tell Rāvaṇa, king of the *rākṣasas*, about the magnificent monkey they had bound there like an elephant in rut. A discussion arose among the mighty *rākṣasas* there: "Who is he?" "To whom does he belong?" "Where has he come from?" "What is his mission?" "Who is his master?" Meanwhile, some of the other *rākṣasas* there, in a rage, said to one another: "Kill him!" "Burn him!" "Eat him!"

[55–59] After they had traversed the road, the great monkey suddenly saw the king's palace, adorned with great jewels, and he saw the lord of the *rākṣasas*, his senior retainers at his feet. Immensely powerful Rāvaṇa spied the foremost of monkeys as he was dragged to and fro by the hideous *rākṣasas*. At the same time, the foremost of monkeys saw the lord of the *rākṣasas*, who resembled the blazing sun in power and radiance. Ten-faced Rāvaṇa glared at the monkey, his eyes rolling and red with rage. Then he directed his foremost counselors who were seated there, noble of lineage and exemplary in conduct, to question him. When they had questioned him in due order regarding his mission, its purpose, and the instigator of that purpose, the monkey began his response by saying: "I have come here as an emissary from the lord of the tawny monkeys."

Sarga 47

[1–5] Hanumān, fearsome in his power, his eyes red with anger, then gazed upon the lord of the *rākṣasas*, amazed at his exploit. Then Hanumān gazed upon the immeasurably splendid lord of the *rākṣasas*, who sat before him like a rain-charged thundercloud resting on the peak of Mount Meru. With his priceless, glittering, golden crown set with masses of pearls, he was luminous and resplendent. He wore exquisite, golden jewelry made up largely of priceless gems and fastened with diamond pins. They seemed to be creations of the imagination. He was clothed in costly silks and covered

with red sandalwood paste. His body was beautifully adorned with various lovely designs.

[6–8] With his ten large and beautiful heads, each with red eyes, terrifying appearance, large, sharp, and shining fangs, and pendulous lips, that powerful hero was as splendid as Mount Mandara, its peaks filled with various savage beasts. Resembling a mass of black collyrium and with a sparkling necklace—its principal gemstone like the full moon—strung across his chest, he looked like a thundercloud crossed by a bright line of flying *balāka* cranes. With their coating of fine sandalwood paste, their armlets tightly fastened, and their bracelets flashing, his muscular arms resembled five-headed serpents.

[9–14] He was seated on a great and splendid crystal throne. It was exquisite, adorned with jeweled fastenings and covered with a magnificent cushion. He was closely attended by young women exquisitely ornamented, who stood all around him with yak-tail fly whisks in their hands. He sat surrounded by four *rākṣasas* arrogant in their power. Skilled in counsel, they were his counselors: Durdhara, Prahasta, the *rākṣasa* Mahāpārśva, and the counselor Nikumbha. Surrounded by all of them, he resembled the earth surrounded by the four seas. Attended by still other highly intelligent counselors, skilled in counsel, and by all his ministers, he resembled the lord of the gods attended by the gods.

[15–20] Filled with the greatest wonder, Hanumān could not take his eyes off the *rākṣasa* lord, even though the *rākṣasas*, whose strength was terrifying, were belaboring him. As he gazed upon the radiant lord of the *rākṣasas*, Hanumān was dazzled by his splendor, and he thought: "Oh what beauty! What steadfastness! What strength! What splendor! Truly, the king of the *rākṣasas* is endowed with every virtue! If this mighty *rākṣasa* lord were not so unrighteous, he could be the guardian of the world of the gods, Indra included. Because of that, all beings, even the gods and *dānavas*, fear him, for he is capable in his wrath of reducing the whole world to one vast sea." Such were the wise monkey's various thoughts as he gazed upon the grandeur of the *rākṣasa* king, immeasurable in his power.

Sarga 48

[1–3] When great-armed Rāvaṇa, who makes the worlds cry out, saw that yellow-eyed monkey standing before him, he was seized with a towering

rage. His eyes reddened with rage, the king addressed these profound and purposeful words—well suited to the occasion—to Prahasta, foremost of his counselors: “Ask this evil creature where he comes from, what his purpose is, and what is the meaning of his destroying my grove and menacing the *rākṣasa* women.”

[4–9] Upon hearing Rāvaṇa’s words, Prahasta said this: “Take heart, bless you, you need have no fear, monkey. If Indra has sent you to the abode of Rāvaṇa, then tell the truth; do not be afraid, monkey, you will be released. Have you taken on this handsome form and entered our city as an agent of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, or of Yama, the god of death, or of Varuṇa, the lord of the waters? Or perhaps you are a messenger dispatched by Viṣṇu, who is desirous of conquering me, for only your appearance is that of a monkey, not your power. You must speak truthfully, monkey, and then you will be set free. But if you speak falsely, you will be put to death. Now then, tell us your purpose in entering the realm of Rāvaṇa.”

[10–16] Addressed in this fashion, the foremost of tawny monkeys replied to the lord of the *rākṣasa* hosts: “I am no agent of Śakra, Yama, or Varuṇa. I have no alliance with the lord of wealth, Kubera, nor have I been sent by Viṣṇu. This is my natural form; I am a monkey who has come here. Since it is so difficult to obtain an audience with the lord of the *rākṣasas*, I destroyed the *rākṣasa* king’s grove in order to get one. Then those powerful *rākṣasas* came, spoiling for a fight. I only fought back in self-defense. It is impossible for even the gods and *asuras* to bind me with bonds or divine weapons; for such is the boon that I received from Grandfather Brahmā himself. But in my desire to see the king, I submitted to the divine weapon. When I was tightly bound by the *rākṣasas*, the divine weapon released me. You must know that I am a messenger of the immeasurably powerful Rāghava. Please, my lord, listen to my beneficial words.”

Sarga 49

[1–3] Looking straight at mighty, ten-faced Rāvaṇa, the great and mighty tawny monkey, unafraid, spoke this sensible speech: “I have come to your country on the orders of Sugrīva. Lord of the *rākṣasas*, your brother, the lord of the tawny monkeys, inquires after your well-being. Now listen to the advice of your brother, great Sugrīva. His words, consistent with

righteousness and polity, will be for your benefit both in this world and in the next:

[4–7] " 'There was a king named Daśaratha, rich in chariots, elephants, and horses. He was a kinsman—like a father—of all the people and equal in splendor to the lord of gods. His eldest son was his favorite. On the orders of his father, that great-armed prince went into exile in the Daṇḍaka forest. There that powerful man—whose name is Rāma—followed the path of righteousness along with his brother Lakṣmaṇa and his wife, Sītā. Then Sītā, his wife—daughter of the great King Janaka of Videha and devoted to her husband—got lost in the woods.

[8–13] " 'Searching for the queen, the prince and his younger brother reached Mount Ṛśyamūka, where they encountered Sugrīva. The latter promised Rāma that he would search for Sītā, while Rāma declared that he would secure the kingdom of the tawny monkeys for Sugrīva. Slaying Vālin in battle, Prince Rāma installed Sugrīva in the kingship as the lord of the hosts of apes and tawny monkeys. True to his promise and intent upon the search for Sītā, Sugrīva, lord of the tawny monkeys, dispatched the tawny monkeys in all directions. Hundreds, thousands, and millions of tawny monkeys are searching for her in all directions, down below and even up in the sky. Those heroic tawny monkeys are possessed of enormous strength. They are swift, and nothing can hinder their progress. Some are like Garuḍa Vainateya and others like the wind god.'

[14–18] "As for me, my name is Hanumān, and I am Māruta's flesh-and-blood son. It is for Sītā's sake that I have come here, anxious to find her, swiftly leaping the ocean, a hundred leagues in breadth. You, sir, are learned in righteousness and polity and have hoarded up a great treasure of asceticism. A wise man like you should not be holding the wife of another man against her will. Wise persons such as yourself are not given to actions that are contrary to righteousness, fraught with manifold dangers, and utterly self-destructive. For who, even among the gods and *asuras*, could possibly withstand the arrows loosed by Lakṣmaṇa and directed by the wrath of Rāma? There is no one in all the three worlds, your majesty, who can transgress against Rāghava and then find happiness.

[19–22] "So you must heed this advice—beneficial in the past, present, and future and conforming to righteousness and polity—and give Jānakī back to the lord of men. For I have now accomplished here what was well-

nigh impossible: I have found the queen. Rāghava now must be the judge as to what action remains to be taken hereafter. I have seen Sītā, so wholly given over to grief, whom you took without realizing that she is like a five-headed serpent. It is no more possible for her to be confined, even by the gods and *asuras* together, than it would be for heavily poisoned food, once eaten, to be assimilated through the power of digestion.

[23–28] "Moreover, it is not right that you should destroy the fruits of your righteousness—acquired through your long austerity—and your great longevity as well. Now, sir, you may be relying on the invulnerability at the hands of the gods and *asuras* that you have secured for yourself through your austerities. There was, however, a major exception with regard to that. For Sugrīva is not a god, an *asura*, a human, a *rākṣasa*, a *gandharva*, a *yakṣa*, nor a serpent. Rāghava is a human, while Sugrīva is a lord of tawny monkeys. How, then, will you save your life, your majesty? The fruits of righteousness may not coexist with those of unrighteousness. Each one gives rise to its own fruits; and righteousness is unable to outweigh unrighteousness. There is no doubt that you, sir, have reaped the fruits of your earlier righteousness. But you must now swiftly suffer the consequences of your unrighteousness.

[29–33] "Since you know about the slaughter in Janasthāna, the killing of Vālin, and the alliance between Rāma and Sugrīva, you must now know what would be best for you. I could, of course, destroy Laṅkā along with its horses, chariots, and elephants all by myself; but that is for Rāma to decide. For Rāma made a solemn vow in the presence of the hosts of apes and tawny monkeys to annihilate his enemies who had assaulted Sītā. Even Indra himself, the smasher of citadels, could not insult Rāma and then find happiness—what then to say of any other, especially a person such as you? For you should realize that she whom you know as Sītā and keep here under your control is really Kālarātri—the dark night of universal destruction—who will bring ruin to all of Laṅkā.

[34–36] "So you had best take thought for what is best for you and take off the noose of Kāla—embodied in the form of Sītā—that you have placed upon your own shoulders. Otherwise, you shall witness your city, along with its streets and its palaces, crushed by the wrath of Rāma and consumed by the blazing power of Sītā." When unrivaled, ten-headed Rāvaṇa had heard these eloquent but unwelcome words, his eyes rolled with rage, and

he ordered the execution of the great monkey who had uttered them so fearlessly.

Sarga 50

[1–4] When Rāvaṇa had heard those words of the great monkey, he was beside himself with anger and ordered his execution. But when wicked Rāvaṇa had ordered the execution of one who had duly declared himself to be an emissary, Vibhīṣaṇa did not approve of it. Seeing that the lord of the *rākṣasas* was enraged and considering the nature of what he had ordered to be done, Vibhīṣaṇa, who was always committed to proper conduct, reflected as to what he should do. Having come to a decision in this matter, the conqueror of his foes soothingly paid his respects to his elder brother. Most skilled with words, he addressed these highly beneficial words to him:

[5–9] "Your majesty, the execution of this monkey would not become you. For, mighty king, it would be both contrary to righteousness and censurable from the point of view of the conduct of worldly affairs. Undoubtedly, he has proved to be a great enemy. For he has wrought unparalleled offense. Nonetheless, the virtuous do not advocate killing an emissary. Moreover, there are many other punishments ordained for emissaries. Mutilation, flogging, shaving the head, and branding—these are the punishments that are prescribed in the case of an emissary. But I have never heard of killing an emissary. How could a person like you, sir, whose mind has been trained in matters of righteousness and polity and who resolves matters through weighing what is proper and what is not, permit himself to come under the sway of anger? The truly strong control their anger. There is no one, mighty king, who is your equal in the exposition of righteousness, the conduct of worldly affairs, or grasping the meaning of the *śāstras*. For in such matters, you surpass all the gods and *asuras*.

[10–13] "Moreover, I can see no advantage whatever in killing this monkey. Let your rod of punishment fall instead upon those who have sent him. Whether he is good or evil, he has been sent by others. Expressing the intentions of others, entirely under their control, a messenger never deserves death. Then, too, your majesty, if he is killed, I cannot think of any other flying creature here who could subsequently go back to the far shore of the ocean. Therefore, conqueror of enemy citadels, you should not bother

to kill him. Instead, sir, you should exert yourself with respect to Indra and the gods.

[14–17] “Moreover, if he is killed, O warrior so fond of war, I can think of no other emissary who could incite those two ill-mannered princes to battle, for they are very far away. And so, delighter of hearts, it would not be proper for you, who are unconquerable even by the gods and *asuras*, to deprive the *rākṣasas*, those sons of chaos, who are powerful, courageous, and spirited, of an opportunity for battle. For you have more than ten million troops intent on your welfare. They are the foremost of all those who bear arms: valiant, well disciplined, born in highly virtuous families, spirited, and well fed. So let a few of them set out at once at your command with a portion of your army. Once they have captured those two stupid princes, they will have established your power over your foes.”

Sarga 51

[1–4] When mighty ten-necked Rāvaṇa had heard his brother’s words, so well suited to the time and place, he made this reply: “You have spoken well, sir. To kill a messenger is indeed reprehensible. However, some punishment other than death must be inflicted upon him. It is said that the tail is the monkeys’ most cherished possession. Therefore, let his be set alight immediately. Once his tail is burning, let him go. Then let all his kinsmen and relations, his friends and those dear to him, see him dejected and drawn by the disfigurement of his tail.”

[5–9] Then the lord of the *rākṣasas* commanded: “Let the *rākṣasas* lead him through every crossroads of the city with his tail ablaze.” Hearing his words, the *rākṣasas*, brutal in their anger, wrapped Hanumān’s tail in worn-out cotton rags. As his tail was being wrapped, the great monkey began to grow, as might a fire, eater of oblations, on reaching dry fuel in the woodlands. Drenching his tail with oil, they set fire to it. His very being consumed with rage and indignation, his face resembling the rising sun, Hanumān struck down the *rākṣasas* with his blazing tail.

[10–14] When the cruel *rākṣasas* began to bind him once again, the foremost of the heroic tawny monkeys came to a decision that was well suited to the moment: “Of course these *rākṣasas* are incapable even of binding me, for I could break these bonds, leap up, and kill them. Indeed, I am a match for all the *rākṣasas* in battle. Still, I must endure all of this in

order to please Rāma. I still must scout out Lañkā once again, for—due to the arrangement of its defensive works—I could not see it clearly at night. I absolutely must view Lañkā by morning light. So let the *rākṣasas* afflict me to their heart's content with additional bonds and by setting my tail on fire too. It doesn't bother me at all."

[15–19] Then, in great delight, the *rākṣasas* seized that powerful and great bull among monkeys, who gave no sign of his emotions, and they set forth. Cruel in their actions, the *rākṣasas* led him through the city, filling it with the sounds of conches and *bherī* drums and making it resound with their shouting. As the great monkey Hanumān was led about the great city of the *rākṣasas*, he observed the splendid mansions. The monkey saw enclosed yards, well-proportioned squares, crossroads, and main roads crowded with houses. In the squares, at the crossroads, and along the royal highway, all the *rākṣasas* proclaimed the monkey to be a spy.

[20–22] Once the tip of Hanumān's tail was in flames, the hideous-eyed *rākṣasa* women informed the queen of that unwelcome news: "Sītā, that red-faced monkey with whom you were conversing is being led about with his tail in flames." Hearing those cruel words, which grieved her as much as her own abduction, Vaidehī was inflamed with grief, and she prayed to Agni, the eater of oblations.

[23–27] She was intent upon the welfare of the great monkey, and so the large-eyed woman prayed devoutly to Agni, the eater of oblations: "If I have been obedient to my husband, if I have practiced austerity, if I have been a perfectly devoted wife, then may you be cool for Hanumān. If wise Rāma still has any compassion for me and if any good fortune remains to me at all, then may you be cool for Hanumān. If that righteous man knows that my conduct has been virtuous and that I long to be reunited with him, then may you be cool for Hanumān. If the noble great-armed Sugrīva—true to his vows—is going to rescue me from this misery, then may you be cool for Hanumān."

[28–33] Then the fierce-flamed fire began to burn gently with its flames swirling in an auspicious clockwise motion as if to assure the fawn-eyed woman of the monkey's safety. As his tail was burning, the monkey thought: "Why is it that this blazing fire does not completely engulf me? It appears to have enormous flames, but still it does me no harm. It is as if a mantle of frost had settled on the tip of my tail. On the other hand, it is clear

that this must be some miracle, wrought by Rāma's power, such as I witnessed in the form of the mountain when I was leaping over the ocean, the lord of rivers. If even the ocean and wise Maināka exhibit such urgency on Rāma's behalf, what would fire not do for him? Agni, the purifier, is not burning me because of his friendship with my father, Rāghava's power, and Sītā's compassion."

[34–39] That elephant among monkeys went on musing in this fashion for a while. Then the great monkey sprang up forcefully and roared. Scattering the *rākṣasa* throng, the majestic son of the god of wind reached the city gate, which was as high as a mountaintop. That self-possessed monkey grew to the size of a mountain and then suddenly became exceedingly small once again so that he slipped free of his bonds. Once free, the majestic monkey resumed his mountainous appearance. Glancing about him, he spied the beam attached to the gate. Great-armed Māruti seized that beam, adorned with black iron, and once again began to massacre all the guards. Once he had killed them, that monkey, whose valor was so fierce in battle, gazed out once more over Laṅkā. Wreathed in the flames that were blazing on his tail, he resembled the blazing sun wreathed in its rays.

Sarga 52

[1–5] His desire now accomplished but his determination only heightened, the monkey gazed out over Laṅkā and considered what further action he might undertake, thinking: "Now what else remains for me to do here whereby I may inflict still greater pain upon these *rākṣasas*? Thus far, I have destroyed the grove, killed the most powerful *rākṣasas*, and wiped out part of the army. All that remains is the destruction of the citadel itself. Once the citadel is destroyed, my labors will have reached a favorable conclusion. By putting just a small additional effort into this task, my labors will be truly successful. It would be most fitting for me to gratify the fire god, bearer of oblations, who is blazing so brightly on my tail, with these splendid mansions."

[6–11] Then the great monkey, his tail ablaze, moved about the rooftops of Laṅkā, like a storm cloud crossed by lightning. Hanumān let loose a fire that was like the flames of Kāla's fire. Fanned by the wind, the swift and powerful fire, eater of oblations, grew greater and blazed up like the Kāla's

fire. The wind drove the blazing fire through the houses. Thus the vast, bejeweled palaces with their fretwork of gold and their masses of pearls came crashing down. They crashed to the ground, their lofty terraces shattered, just as the mansions of perfected beings might fall from the heavens once their merit was exhausted.

[12–17] Hanumān saw streams of molten metal flowing from a palace. Varied in hue, they were filled with diamonds, coral, lapis, pearls, and silver. Just as fire is never sated with firewood and straw, so too Hanumān was not sated with killing the lords of the *rākṣasas*. Overwhelmed by the power of Hanumān's wrath, the city of Laṅkā, engulfed in the flames of the fire, the eater of oblations, its heroes slain and its soldiers scattered, was devastated as if by a curse. Wise Hanumān scanned Laṅkā. Marked everywhere by brightly blazing flames of fire, the eater of oblations, its *rākṣasas* in a state of terror, agitation, and despair, the city resembled the earth overwhelmed by the wrath of the self-existent Lord. When he had slain many *rākṣasas*, devastated the grove with its numerous trees, and unleashed fire among the mansions of the *rākṣasas*, the great monkey turned his thoughts to Rāma. Once he had set all of Laṅkā ablaze, that great monkey, foremost of the tawny monkeys, put out the fire on his tail in the ocean.

Sarga 53

[1–5] But as he surveyed the blazing city of Laṅkā lying in ruins, its hosts of *rākṣasas* panic-stricken, the monkey Hanumān began to worry. He was seized by a great anxiety and filled with self-reproach as he thought: "What on earth have I done in burning Laṅkā? How fortunate are those great and outstanding men who manage to check their rising anger with their minds, just as the blazing fire is checked by water. If Laṅkā has been burned, then surely so has the lady Jānakī, and thus, unknowingly, I have wrecked my master's mission. That purpose for the sake of which I undertook this effort has been ruined, since, in burning Laṅkā, I failed to protect Sītā.

[6–10] "Without a doubt, the mission I had undertaken was all but accomplished when, carried away by my anger, I completely wrecked it. It is evident that Jānakī has been killed, for I can see no part of Laṅkā that has not been burned. The entire city has been reduced to ashes. If I have ruined this mission through my own stupidity, I will gladly lay down my life right

here and now. Should I throw myself into the fire this instant or, perhaps, into the great mare's-head fire beneath the sea, or should I, perhaps, offer my body to the creatures living in the sea? For how could I face alive the lord of the tawny monkeys or those two tigers among men after completely ruining their mission?

[11–16] "Indeed, through the fault of giving way to anger, I have demonstrated the unstable nature of monkeys, which is well known throughout the three worlds. Damn that passionate nature—so unstable and out of control—on account of which I failed to protect Sītā though I was fully capable of doing so. If Sītā is lost, then those two will die. If those two die, Sugrīva will perish along with his kinfolk. When Bharata, who dotes upon his brothers, hears of that, how will that righteous man and Śatrughna possibly survive? Once the extremely righteous House of Ikṣvāku is gone, all the people will be oppressed by grief and remorse. Therefore I—bereft of good fortune, stripped of the benefits of righteousness and statecraft, my mind overwhelmed by the fault of anger—will clearly have destroyed the whole world."

[17–23] But as he brooded in this fashion, there appeared omens such as he had directly witnessed before, and he began to think once more: "On the other hand, that auspicious lady, lovely in every limb and protected by her own blazing energy, cannot have died; for fire cannot prevail against fire. For indeed, fire, the purifier, has no power to touch the wife of that righteous man of measureless power for she is protected by her own virtuous conduct. It is certain that because of Rāma's power and Vaidehī's virtue, the bearer of oblations, fire, whose very function is to burn, did not burn me. How could she, the darling of Rāma's heart and a goddess to his three brothers—Bharata and the rest—perish? If fire, whose very function is to burn and who overpowers everything, did not burn my tail, how could it consume that lady? Because of her asceticism, her truthfulness, and her complete devotion to her husband alone, she might burn fire, but fire could never burn her."

[24–28] As Hanumān was musing thus upon the queen's perfect righteousness, he heard the voices of the great celestial bards crying: "What an extraordinary feat Hanumān has accomplished in letting loose this powerful, terrifying, and irresistible fire in the lair of the *rākṣasas*. It strikes us as a wonder—truly a miracle—that although the city of Laṅkā has been

consumed along with its towers, ramparts, and archways, Jānakī has not been burned." Then, by virtue of those omens whose efficacy he had already witnessed, those highly persuasive reasons, and those words of the seers, Hanumān became delighted at heart. So having accomplished the object of his desire and having determined that the princess was unharmed, the monkey resolved to see her face-to-face once more before making his return journey.

Sarga 54

[1–5] Respectfully greeting Jānakī, who had remained under the *śiṃśapā* tree, Hanumān said: "Thank god I have found you here unharmed." Gazing steadfastly at Hanumān, who was on the point of departing, she spoke words to him that were filled with her love for her husband: "Granted, you are fully capable of carrying out this mission all by yourself, slayer of enemy heroes, and this accomplishment of yours would bring you glory. But if Kākutstha, that tormentor of enemy armies, were to fill Laṅkā with his own troops and take me away, that would be worthy of him. Therefore, you should arrange it in such a way that the great battle hero demonstrates valor that is worthy of him."

[6–8] When Hanumān had heard these meaningful, courteous, and reasonable words, he continued with the remaining portion of his own speech: "Soon Kākutstha will come here accompanied by the foremost of the apes and tawny monkeys. After he has defeated his enemies in battle, he will put an end to your sorrow." When he had consoled Vaidehī in this fashion, Hanumān, son of Māruta, set his mind on departure and respectfully saluted her.

[9–13] Then, anxious to see his master, the tiger among monkeys and crusher of his foes climbed splendid Mount Ariṣṭa. It was covered with dark forest groves graced with tall *padmaka* trees and was filled with *sāla* trees, palms, *aśvakarṇas*, and bamboo. It was adorned with spreading canopies of blossoming creepers; it was filled with herds of various beasts; and it was ornamented with exposed veins of metallic ore. It abounded with many waterfalls and was impassable because of its heaps of huge boulders. It was frequented by great seers, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *kinnaras*, and great serpents. It was dense with trees and creepers, and its caves harbored prides of lions. It was haunted by numerous tigers. It had sweet roots and fruit trees.

[14–18] Such was the mountain that the great and exceedingly powerful leaping monkey climbed, driven by excitement and hastening to see Rāma. Crushed under the soles of his feet, the boulders on the lovely mountain slopes shattered noisily and were reduced to dust. When he had ascended that lordly mountain, the great monkey began to grow in his eagerness to cross from the southern to the northern shore of the salt sea. Once the mighty son of Pavana the wind god had climbed the mountain, he beheld the terrifying ocean, the abode of fish and serpents. Like Māruta the wind god himself rushing through the sky, that tiger among tawny monkeys, the wind god's son, set out from the south to the north.

[19–21] Crushed by the monkey, the great mountain and all its inhabitants emitted a loud roar. Its peaks trembling and its trees falling, it sank back into the earth. Ripped up by the force of his thighs, the blossoming trees fell to the ground, shattered, as if they had been struck by Śakra's weapon. One could hear a dreadful roaring, which seemed as if to pierce the heavens, of mighty lions crushed deep in their caves.

[22–26] *Vidyādhara* women flew up suddenly from the mountain, their garments disordered and slipping, their jewelry in disarray. Huge, powerful, and highly venomous serpents with tongues of flame coiled themselves as their heads and necks were crushed. *Kinnaras*, great serpents, *gandharvas*, *yakṣas*, and *vidyādharas* abandoned that flattened mountain and flew up into the sky. Crushed by that powerful monkey, the majestic mountain, lofty with its forested peaks, sank into the underworld called Rasātala. That mountain—ten leagues across and thirty high—had now become level with the ground.

Sarga 55

[1–6] Tireless Hanumān sailed across the lovely, shining, and boundless sky. With the moon for its white lotus, the sun for its *kāraṇḍava* birds, the constellations Tiṣya and Śravaṇa for its sweet-voiced *kādambas*, the clouds for its seaweed and bordering meadows, the constellation Punarvasu for its sea monster, the planet Mars for its mighty shark, the celestial elephant Airāvata for its great island, the constellation Svāti for the splashing of its *haṃsas*, diverse winds for its swelling waves, moonbeams for its cool waters, and serpents, *yakṣas*, and *gandharvas* for its blossoming water lilies and lotuses, the sky resembled the ocean. As the great and majestic flying

monkey Hanumān moved through the abode of Māruta, he seemed to devour the heavens, to scratch the moon, the lord of stars, to drag along the sky with its constellations and sun's orb, and to drag in his wake its massed clouds. Tinted white, pink, blue-black, red, green, and purple, the huge clouds looked beautiful.

[7–11] Constantly entering and emerging from the massed clouds, he resembled the moon alternately hidden and revealed. Roaring with a mighty roar so that he sounded like the thundering of a cloud, the mighty monkey sped once more over the middle of the ocean. Caressing great fair-peaked Mount Maināka, the powerful and swift monkey sped along like a arrow of iron loosed from a bow. When he had almost arrived, that bull among tawny monkeys spied great Mount Mahendra, which resembled a cloud, and he roared. Hearing the sound of his roaring all around them, all the monkeys, anxious to see their comrade, were filled with eager expectation.

[12–16] Then Jāmbavān, foremost of tawny monkeys, his heart thrilled with joy, summoned all the tawny monkeys and said these words: "By all means that is Hanumān, who must have accomplished his mission; of this there can be no doubt. For if he had not accomplished his mission, his roar would not sound like that." When the tawny monkeys heard the sound of great Hanumān's roar and the sound of the pumping of his arms and thighs, they were delighted, and they leapt up on every side. Leaping from treetop to treetop and from mountain peak to mountain peak in their excitement, they gathered together in their eagerness to see Hanumān. In their delight the monkeys in the treetops grasped the blossoming branches and shook them, as one might wave brightly colored clothing.

[17–23] When all the monkeys saw that great monkey rushing toward them like a massive storm cloud, they stood with their hands cupped in reverence. The swift monkey, who looked like a mountain, landed on the thickly forested summit of Mount Mahendra. Then all the bulls among monkeys, delighted at heart, gathered around great Hanumān. Gathering around him who had returned unhurt, they were filled with the greatest delight, and their faces lit up with joy. The tawny monkeys honored that best of tawny monkeys, the son of Māruta, with gifts of roots and fruits. Some of those bulls among monkeys cried out in their delight, while others chattered. Still others fetched tree branches in their excitement. The great

monkey Hanumān made obeisance to his respected elders, Jāmbavān and the rest, and to Prince Aṅgada.

[24–27] When the two of them had paid homage to him who was worthy of homage and the monkeys had honored him, courageous Hanumān tersely reported: “I have found the queen.” Then, taking Aṅgada, the son of Vālin, by the hand, he sat down in a charming wooded spot on Mount Mahendra. With great excitement, Hanumān said to those bulls among monkeys: “I have found her, Janaka’s daughter, in a grove of *aśoka* trees. That young and blameless lady is being guarded by horrendous *rākṣasa* women. Wearing a single braid of hair, weak with fasting, soiled, emaciated, her hair matted, she is desperate for the sight of Rāma.”

[28–31] When the monkeys heard Māruti’s all-important words beginning with “I have found her,” which were like nectar to them, they were all overjoyed. Some of those powerful monkeys roared; others howled. Some bellowed and others chattered, while still others bellowed in return. Some of those elephants among monkeys in their excitement raised their thick, long, curving tails aloft and beat them on the ground. Still other monkeys leapt down from mountain peaks and in their excitement hugged Hanumān, who resembled a bull elephant.

[32–34] After Hanumān had spoken, Aṅgada responded with these excellent words there in the midst of the heroic tawny monkeys: “Monkey, there is none to equal you in strength and courage; for you have returned after leaping the wide ocean. Thank heaven you have found the queen, Rāma’s illustrious wife. Thank heaven Kākutstha will now give up the grief born of his separation from Sītā.”

[35–38] Then those monkeys, surrounding Aṅgada, Hanumān, and Jāmbavān, sat down on large boulders in great delight. All those great monkeys—anxious to hear of his jumping over the ocean, his observations of Laṅkā, and his encounters with Sītā and Rāvaṇa—then stood with hands cupped in reverence, gazing expectantly at Hanumān’s face. Surrounded by so many monkeys, majestic Aṅgada sat there, like the lord of the gods in heaven attended by the divinities. With renowned Hanumān and illustrious Aṅgada, his armlets bound fast upon his arms, seated joyfully upon it, the vast and lofty mountain peak was ablaze with splendor.

Sarga 56

[1–5] There on the summit of Mahendra, the mighty tawny monkeys, Hanumān and the rest, experienced the greatest delight. Then, in great excitement, Jāmbavān asked that great monkey, the delighted son of the wind god, for an account of his mission, asking: “How did you find the queen? How is she doing there? How has cruel, ten-faced Rāvaṇa been treating her? You must tell us everything truthfully, great monkey. Once we have heard how things stand, we shall consider how best to proceed. Since you are prudent, you must explain to us those things that we are to relate when we return and those things we had best withhold.”

[6–11] Instructed thus by Jāmbavān, Hanumān, his fur bristling with excitement, replied after first bowing his head in homage to Queen Sītā: “You yourselves saw me leap into the sky from the summit of Mount Mahendra, anxious and intent upon reaching the southern shore of ocean. As I was flying along, I encountered what appeared to be a dreadful obstacle. For I spied a ravishing and celestial, golden mountain peak. Since it stood there obstructing my path, I took that mountain for an obstacle. Therefore, as I approached that great, celestial, golden mountain, I formed in my mind the resolution that I must smash it. When I, with my tail, struck the peak of that great mountain, as radiant as the sun, it shattered into a thousand pieces.

[12–17] “Realizing how determined I was, the great mountain spoke sweetly to me, delighting my heart with the words, ‘My son!’ And he said: ‘My name is Maināka, and I dwell in the ocean. You should regard me, who am a friend of Mātariśvan, the wind god, as your paternal uncle. Long ago, my son, when the great mountains had wings, they ranged at will over the earth, causing obstruction everywhere. When the great god Indra, chastiser of Pāka, heard about the mountains’ behavior, he cut off their wings by the thousands with his *vajra*. But, my child, I was saved from that fate by your father, great Māruta, who cast me into the sea. Moreover, subduer of your foes, I must exert myself to assist Rāma, for he is the foremost of those who uphold righteousness, and he is great Indra’s equal in valor.’

[18–21] “When I had heard the words of great Mount Maināka and had informed him of my mission, my mind was filled with eagerness to proceed. Granted leave by great Maināka, I embarked upon the remainder of my journey at full speed. I traveled swiftly on my way for a long time until I spied the goddess Surasā, mother of great serpents. In the middle of

the ocean, that goddess addressed me, saying: ‘You were destined by the gods to be my food, best of tawny monkeys. Therefore, I shall devour you, for you have long been ordained for this fate.’

[22–26] “When I had been addressed in this fashion by Surasā, I stood with hands cupped in reverence, bowing. My face gone pale, I replied with these words: ‘Majestic Rāma Dāśarathi, scorcher of his foes, entered the Daṇḍaka forest with Sītā and his brother Lakṣmaṇa. His wife, Sītā, was carried off by wicked Rāvaṇa. I am a messenger traveling to her by the command of Rāma. You who dwell within his realm should assist him. Or, if you prefer, I will enter your mouth after I have seen Maithilī and tireless Rāma; this I solemnly promise you.’

[27–33] “But when I had addressed her in this fashion, Surasā, who could take on any form at will, replied: ‘No one can escape me, for such is my boon.’ At the time that I was addressed in this fashion by Surasā, I was ten leagues in height. But in an instant, I grew still larger. She then opened her mouth to a size commensurate with mine. But when I saw her mouth open wide, I made my body very small. At that moment, as I was no larger than a thumb, I swiftly flew into her mouth and came out at once. Then the goddess Surasā in her true form addressed me: ‘You may depart at your pleasure, gentle, foremost of tawny monkeys, for the accomplishment of your purpose. You must reunite Vaidehī with great Rāghava. May you be happy, great-armed monkey; I am pleased with you.’ Praised by all beings with cries of ‘Well done! Well done!’ I leapt up like Garuḍa into the vast sky.

[34–39] “Suddenly—though I could not see anything—my shadow was caught. Since I had lost my momentum, I scanned the ten directions, but I could not find what was obstructing my progress. Then this thought occurred to me: ‘What in the world could present such an obstacle to my progress and yet have a form I cannot see?’ And as I was worrying about this, I cast my eyes below me. Then I spied a frightful *rākṣasa* woman lying on the waters. Seeing me immobilized but unafraid, the frightful creature addressed these ominous words to me, laughing loudly: ‘Where do you think you’re going, you big ape? I’m famished and you’re my favorite food. Fill up my body, which has long been deprived of food.’ ‘Very well,’ I said, assenting to her words. But then I made my body swell up to a size much greater than that of her mouth.

[40–43] “Her huge and frightful mouth opened wide in order to devour me. But she had no conception of who I was or of the transformations of which I was capable. Then, in the space of an instant, I contracted my gigantic form, tore out her heart, and I flew up into the sky. When I had torn out her heart, that frightful creature, huge as a mountain, fell back into the salt sea, flinging wide her arms. Then I heard the perfected beings, who travel through the sky along with the celestial bards, crying, ‘The frightful *rākṣasa* woman Siṃhikā was quickly slain by Hanumān.’

[44–47] “When I had killed her, I once more turned my thoughts to my dangerous mission. Then, after traveling a very great distance, I saw the southern shore of the ocean—resplendent with its mountains—where the city of Laṅkā stands. After the sun, maker of day, had set, I entered the citadel, the lair of the *rākṣasas*, unnoticed by those *rākṣasas*, terrifying in their valor. Then, after searching the whole night for the fair-waisted daughter of Janaka, I entered Rāvaṇa’s inner apartments; but still I did not find her. Unable to find Sītā in Rāvaṇa’s palace, I had come up against an ocean of sorrow, the farther shore of which I could not discern.

[48–52] “As I was grieving, I spied a splendid private park enclosed within a high, golden wall. Leaping over that wall, I saw a grove of many trees. In the middle of a grove of *aśoka* trees, there stood a huge *śiṃśapā* tree. Climbing that, I spied a golden grove of plantains. Not far from the *śiṃśapā* tree, I saw a fair young woman whose eyes were like lotus petals but whose face was gaunt with fasting. Like a doe surrounded by tigresses, she was surrounded by cruel and hideous *rākṣasa* women, who fed on flesh and blood.

[53–56] “When I saw that woman in such a state, I understood her to be Rāma’s blameless wife. So I remained there in the *śiṃśapā* tree, watching. Suddenly I heard a deep and tumultuous noise mingled with the jingling of ladies’ belt ornaments and anklets coming from the direction of Rāvaṇa’s dwelling. Greatly alarmed by this, I shrank back into the *śiṃśapā* tree like a bird into a dense thicket. Then mighty Rāvaṇa and his wives approached the place where Sītā stood.

[57–59] “When fair-hipped Sītā saw the lord of the *rākṣasa* hosts, she drew up her thighs and covered her ample breasts with her arms. Falling with his head at her feet, ten-necked Rāvaṇa addressed Sītā in her great misery, saying: ‘You must bestow your affections upon me. But if, in your

pride, haughty Sītā, you do not accept me by the end of two months, I shall drink your blood.’

[60–63] “Hearing these words of wicked Rāvaṇa, Sītā became furiously angry and responded with these excellent words. ‘How is it, most despicable of *rākṣasas*, that your tongue does not fall out when you utter unspeakable things to the wife of immeasurably powerful Rāma, the lord of the House of Ikṣvāku, and the daughter-in-law of Daśaratha? What great heroism you have displayed, you low-born sinner, carrying me off in my husband’s absence and slipping away unseen by that great man! You are not the equal of Rāma; you are not even fit to be his slave! For Rāghava is godlike, truthful, and praiseworthy in battle.’

[64–68] “When ten-faced Rāvaṇa was addressed in this fashion with Jānakī’s harsh words, he flared up suddenly in anger like the flames of a funeral pyre. Rolling his fierce eyes and raising his right fist, he was on the point of killing Maithilī, when the women broke into lamentation. Then that wicked *rākṣasa*’s principal wife, Mandodarī, emerged from the midst of the women and restrained him. She spoke sweet words to him who was tormented by the god of love: ‘What do you want with Sītā, you who are equal in might to great Indra? Make love with me right now! Jānakī is no better than I. My lord, make love right here with the daughters of the gods, *gandharvas*, and *yakṣas*. What do you want with Sītā?’

[69–72] “Then the mighty night-roaming *rākṣasa*, suddenly aroused by all those women together, was led to his palace. When ten-headed Rāvaṇa had gone, the hideous-faced *rākṣasa* women continued to threaten Sītā with cruel and frightful words. But Sītā Jānakī paid no heed to their words, and all their threats had no effect on her. Leaving off their futile ranting, those flesh-eating *rākṣasa* women reported to Rāvaṇa that Sītā’s resolution was formidable.

[73–76] “Their hopes dashed, they abandoned their efforts. Stationing themselves around her on every side, they succumbed to sleep. Once they had fallen asleep, Sītā, in her great misery, devoted to her husband’s welfare and despondent, lamented piteously and gave herself up to her grief. Seeing Sītā’s dreadful situation, I quietly mused but could not shake off my anxiety. Then I devised a means whereby I might converse with Jānakī: I began to extol the dynasty of the House of Ikṣvāku.

[77–82] “When the queen heard me recite those words, sanctified by the names of those royal seers, she answered me, blinded by her tears: ‘Who are you? How and why have you come here, bull among monkeys? What is the nature of your friendship with Rāma? Please tell me that.’ When I had heard those words of hers, I said these words: ‘My queen, your husband, Rāma, has as his ally Sugrīva, the mighty and valorous lord of the monkeys, whose valor is fearsome. Know that I am his servant Hanumān. I have come here dispatched by your husband, tireless Rāma. The majestic tiger among men, Dāśarathi himself, gave me this signet ring as a token of identification for you, illustrious lady. I wish to do what you command, my queen. What must I do? I can take you back to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. What is your reply?’

[83–89] “When she had heard that and reflected upon it, Sītā, the delight of Janaka, said: ‘Let Rāghava destroy Rāvaṇa and then take me back himself.’ Bowing my head to the noble and blameless queen, I asked her for some token that would delight Rāghava’s heart. Addressed in that fashion, the fair-hipped lady in great agitation gave me a splendid jewel and entrusted me with a message. Bowing to the princess, with a focused mind, I reverently circumambulated her with my thoughts intent on my return here. Reaching some decision in her mind, she replied further: ‘Hanumān, please relate my tale to Rāghava. You must do so in such a way that when Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa hear it, those two heroes will come at once with Sugrīva. Otherwise, I have but two months more to live. Then Kākutstha will never see me again, and I will die with no one to protect me.’

[90–95] “When I heard those piteous words, anger overcame me; and I perceived at once that there remained an additional task for me to do. Then my body began to expand until it resembled a mountain. Spoiling for a fight, I began to devastate the grove. Awakening, the hideous-faced *rākṣasa* women saw that the stand of trees had been destroyed and that its birds and beasts were confused and terrified. When they saw me in the grove, they gathered together from here and there, and they quickly went off as a group to report to Rāvaṇa, saying: ‘Mighty king, a wicked monkey, not realizing your power, has destroyed your inaccessible grove. Lord of kings, you must immediately order the death of this malicious creature so that he may be destroyed; for he has done you an injury.’

[96–100] “When he heard that, the lord of the *rākṣasas* dispatched the *rākṣasas* known as *kiṃkaras*, who were obedient to his will and virtually invincible. But with an iron beam, I slew eighty thousand of them, all of them armed with lances and war hammers, there in that wooded tract. The survivors among them fled at top speed and reported to Rāvaṇa that I had annihilated his troops. Then I had an idea and scaled a domed palace. After killing with a column the hundred *rākṣasas* stationed there, in my rage I completely smashed that palace, the finest in Laṅkā.

[101–104] “Then Rāvaṇa ordered out Jambumālin, the son of Prahasta. But with that dreadful iron beam, I annihilated that powerful *rākṣasa*, expert in combat, along with his retinue. When Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, heard about that, he sent forth the very powerful sons of his minister, accompanied by an army of foot soldiers. But with that same iron beam I led them all to the house of Yama, the lord of the dead. Learning that his minister’s sons, fleet-footed in battle, had been slain, Rāvaṇa sent forth his five heroic generals, but I annihilated them all, along with their troops.

[105–109] “Then ten-necked Rāvaṇa sent forth to battle his mighty son Akṣa along with many *rākṣasas*. But I seized the prince, Mandodarī’s son—expert in combat and armed with a sword and shield—as he leapt up into the sky. Whirling him around a hundred times, I smashed him. Learning that Akṣa had been smashed as soon as he had arrived, ten-faced Rāvaṇa, in a towering rage, ordered out his second son, named Indrajit, who was powerful and invincible in battle. Once I had rendered that bull among *rākṣasas* and his whole army powerless in battle, I experienced the greatest delight. For it was with the greatest confidence that Rāvaṇa had sent forth that mighty, great-armed warrior and his heroic troops all puffed up with pride.

[110–114] “But then he swiftly bound me with the divine weapon of Brahmā, after which the *rākṣasas* tied me up with ropes. They captured me and led me into the presence of Rāvaṇa. When he saw me, wicked Rāvaṇa spoke with me. Interrogated about my coming to Laṅkā and the killing of the *rākṣasas*, I responded that I had done it all for Sītā’s sake, saying: ‘I came to your palace, my lord, because I was anxious to find her. I am the monkey Hanumān, Māruta’s flesh-and-blood son. Know that I am a

monkey, a messenger of Rāma, and a minister of Sugrīva. It is as Rāma's messenger that I have come before you.

[115–117] " 'Listen, lord of the *rākṣasas*, to the message that I will convey to you. The lord of the tawny monkeys addresses these temperate words to you. They are in keeping with righteousness, profit, and pleasure and are as beneficial as wholesome food. Sugrīva says: "While I was living on Mount Ṛśyamūka with its abundant trees, Rāghava, valorous in battle, became my ally. Your majesty, Rāma said to me, 'A *rākṣasa* has abducted my wife. Please make a pact with me in order to assist me in this regard.'

[118–122] " ' "Then, witnessed by Agni, Lord Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa forged an alliance with me, Sugrīva, whose kingdom Vālin had usurped. After killing Vālin in battle with a single arrow, Rāma made me—a lord of leaping monkeys—king of the monkeys. We must wholeheartedly assist him; and so, in keeping with righteousness, I have dispatched a messenger to you. Sītā must be brought at once and delivered to Rāghava before the powerful tawny monkeys exterminate your army. For who does not know of old about the power of the monkeys who are summoned into the presence of the gods?"

[123–127] " 'Thus has the king of the monkeys addressed you.' When I had spoken to Rāvaṇa in this fashion, he glared at me in rage as if he would burn me up with his very glance. Then the *rākṣasa*, cruel in his actions, ordered that I be put to death. But his wise brother, Vibhīṣaṇa by name, entreated with the king of the *rākṣasas* on my behalf, saying: 'The execution of an emissary is not sanctioned in the treatises on kingship, *rākṣasa*. An emissary bearing a beneficial message must convey it accurately. O you whose valor is unequaled, even when an emissary has committed some grave offense, then, according to the *śāśtras*, only disfigurement is sanctioned, never execution.'

[128–132] "When Vibhīṣaṇa had addressed him in this fashion, Rāvaṇa gave this order to the *rākṣasas*: 'Burn his tail at once.' Hearing his order, they wrapped my tail completely with cotton rags and ropes of hemp. When they had made the bonds secure, the *rākṣasas*, terrifying in their strength, set fire to my tail while beating me with staves and fists. Although I was bound with many bonds and leashed by the *rākṣasas*, I was so eager to see the city by day that I felt not the slightest discomfort. While I was bound

and engulfed in flames, those heroic *rākṣasas* loudly proclaimed my crimes along the royal highway and at the city gates.

[133–135] "Once again shrinking my body's colossal size, I freed myself from my bonds and resumed my natural size. Seizing an iron beam, I slew those *rākṣasas*. Then I swiftly leapt up onto the city gate. With my blazing tail, I calmly burned down the city with its turrets and gateways, just as the fire that ends a cosmic era consumes all creatures.

[136–140] "But no sooner had I burned down Laṅkā when anxiety gripped me: 'In burning down Laṅkā, I must, no doubt, have burned Sītā.' Just then, I heard the words—their every syllable auspicious—of celestial bards announcing astonishing news: 'Jānakī has not been burned!' Only when I had heard those marvelous words, did the situation become clear to me. Then, after I had seen Vaidehī once more, she dismissed me. For the sake of Sugrīva's commitment, I have accomplished all this through the power of Rāghava and the great energy of you all. I have reported to you everything just as it happened there. Now we must do whatever remains to be done here."

Sarga 57

[1–3] When Hanumān, son of Māruta, had related all of this, he began once more to utter excellent words: "It is because of Sītā's virtuous character that the perseverance of Rāma, the alacrity of Sugrīva, and my great leap have all proved fruitful. Sītā's virtuous character, you bulls among leaping monkeys, is worthy of a noble lady. With the power of her austerities, she could uphold the worlds or, if angered, burn them up.

[4–7] "By all means, Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, must be enormously powerful, since his body was not destroyed by the power of her austerities when he touched her. Even a flame touched with one's hand would not do what the daughter of Janaka could do were she to be suffused with anger. The virtuous lady was standing miserably at the foot of a *śiṃśapā* tree in the midst of wicked Rāvaṇa's *aśoka* grove. Surrounded by *rākṣasa* women, drawn with grief and suffering, she was devoid of radiance, like the crescent moon occluded by a line of clouds.

[8–10] "Devoted to her husband alone and disdaining Rāvaṇa, arrogant in his power, fair-hipped Jānakī Vaidehī remains a prisoner. Devoted to Rāma with her whole heart, virtuous Vaidehī can think of no one else but

Rāma, just as Paulomī could think of no one but Indra, the smasher of citadels. Devoted to her husband's welfare, Sītā is clad in that same single garment; covered with dirt, her body is wretched with grief and suffering.

[11–17] "I found her there in the women's grove, in the midst of hideous *rākṣasa* women, who menaced her constantly. Dejected, her hair in a single braid, she thinks only of her husband. She sleeps on the ground; and her body has grown so pale that she resembles a lotus pond at the onset of winter. Her purpose utterly averse to that of Rāvaṇa, she had resolved to die. Still, with great difficulty, I managed to inspire confidence in that fawn-eyed woman. I managed to converse with her and to reveal to her all that had occurred. When she heard about the alliance between Rāma and Sugrīva, she was delighted. Her virtuous conduct is unshakable, and her supreme devotion is fixed upon her husband. Ten-faced Rāvaṇa must be great indeed, if these alone cannot destroy him. Still, Rāma will be but the mere instrument of his destruction. Such is the condition of virtuous Sītā, given over utterly to her sorrow. Now then, let us do everything that must be done to remedy it."

Sarga 58

[1–4] Hearing these words of Hanumān, Añgada, Vālin's son, said: "Given the present situation as reported to you, sirs, it would be appropriate for us —with the consent of all the principal monkeys, Jāmbavān and the rest—to appear before the two sons of the king with Vaidehī. I myself am fully able swiftly to destroy the citadel of Lañkā single-handedly, including its hosts of *rākṣasas*, and to kill mighty Rāvaṇa. How much more easily, then, might I do so with the assistance of such heroic, powerful, accomplished, and capable leaping monkeys, skilled in the use of weapons and eager for victory?

[5–8] "I myself will destroy Rāvaṇa in battle, along with his troops, his retinue, his sons, and his brothers. And even if I should encounter in battle the divine weapons of Indrajit, the conqueror of Śakra—those blinding missiles of Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, Vāyu, and Varuṇa—I shall destroy them and annihilate the *rākṣasas*. If I have your permission, sirs, my valor will subdue Rāvaṇa. The unending and incomparable hail of boulders I shall release would kill even the gods in battle; how much more easily would it kill those night-roaming *rākṣasas*!

[9–11] “The ocean might exceed its shore, and Mount Mandara might tremble. But no army of enemies could ever make Jāmbavān waver in battle. The monkey hero, the son of Vāyu, is capable of destroying the *rākṣasa* leaders of all the *rākṣasa* hosts all by himself. Mount Mandara itself would shatter from the impact of the thighs of Panasa or great Nīla; how much more easily would mere *rākṣasas* be destroyed!

[12–16] “Name anyone—even among the gods, the *asuras*, the *yakṣas*, the *gandharvas*, the mighty serpents, and the mighty birds—who can oppose Mainda or Dvivida in battle. These two outstanding leaping monkeys, the sons of the Aśvins, possess enormous speed. They are filled with the greatest pride and are arrogant because of their boon from Grandfather Brahmā. For long ago, in order to honor the Aśvins, Brahmā, the Grandfather of all the worlds, conferred upon them the incomparable boon of complete invulnerability. Intoxicated with their arrogance because of that boon, those two heroic leaping monkeys annihilated a vast army and drank the nectar of immortality of the gods. Let all the other monkeys stand aside! If roused to fury, these two alone are capable of destroying Laṅkā with all its cavalry, chariots, and war-elephants.

[17–22] “Then, too, leaping monkeys, it would be improper for us to appear before great Rāghava without the queen after having found her. It appears to me improper for you, sirs, whose valor is renowned, to report there, ‘We have found the queen, but we have not brought her back.’ For you, foremost among tawny monkeys, there is no one in all the worlds—including the gods and the *daityas*—who is your equal either in leaping or in valor. What else remains to be done with regard to the *rākṣasas*, whose champions have been slain in this fashion by Hanumān? Let us just take Jānakī and go.” Then Jāmbavān, foremost among tawny monkeys and expert in sound advice, in delight, replied to him who had formed this resolution in words were full of sound advice: “As you perceive, prince, this plan is not impracticable for us, but you should look toward the fulfillment of our mission in such a way that our plan is determined by Rāma.”

Sarga 59

[1–6] The great monkey Hanumān and the other heroic forest-dwelling monkeys led by Aṅgada accepted the advice of Jāmbavān. Leaving the

summit of Mount Mahendra, those bulls among leaping monkeys all leapt up to follow the son of Vāyu. With their huge bodies and vast strength, they seemed almost to obscure the sky. They looked like Mount Meru or Mount Mandara, or like huge, rutting elephant bulls. It seemed almost as if they bore up with their gaze swift, wise, and mighty Hanumān, honored by all beings. Their mission accomplished, their spirits uplifted by the success of their undertaking, they were now confident that Rāghava's purpose would be accomplished and that their master, Sugrīva, would achieve the greatest glory. All of them were eager to relate the good news. All were joyful at the prospect of battle. All were resolute and determined to assist Rāma.

[7–10] Leaping into the sky and flying along, those woodland creatures came upon a forest grove filled with trees and creepers that was comparable to the heavenly garden Nandana. Enchanting all creatures and yet forbidden to them, it was known as the Madhuvana, and it was under the protection of Sugrīva. It was always guarded by the immensely powerful monkey Dadhimukha, the maternal uncle of Sugrīva, the great lord of the monkeys. When the monkeys arrived at that vast grove, so dear to the heart of the monkey lord, they became wildly excited.

[11–17] Seeing the vast Madhuvana, those monkeys, themselves tawny as honey-wine, begged Prince Aṅgada for some honey-wine. So the prince obtained permission from the senior monkeys, beginning with Jāmbavān, and gave them leave to drink the honey-wine. Granted leave, all the forest-dwelling monkeys were delighted; and they began to dance all around in great joy. Some sang, while others prostrated themselves; some danced, while others laughed; some fell down, while others staggered about; some jumped up and down, while others babbled incoherently. Some supported one another, while others fell to arguing among themselves; some leapt from tree to tree, while others leapt from the treetops to the ground. Some sprang to the tops of the great trees with great speed. Laughing, one of them approached another who was singing, while another who was laughing approached yet another who was grinning. A weeping monkey approached another who was weeping, while another shoved one who was shoving yet a third. The monkey army was in confusion because of the behavior induced by the honey-wine-inebriated minds of its soldiers. There was not a single one of them who was not drunk, nor a single one who was not sated.

[18–22] When the monkey known as Dadhimukha saw that the grove was being devoured and its trees were being stripped of leaves and blossoms, he angrily tried to stop the monkeys. Although he was reviled by those arrogant monkeys, that elder among the heroic tawny monkeys, the guardian of the grove, fierce in his power, resolved once more to protect the grove from them. To some he rudely spoke harsh words; others he slapped unrestrainedly with his open hand. Approaching some others, he began to quarrel, while still others he approached in a conciliatory manner. But in their drunkenness and power, those monkeys—irresistible in their impetuosity—surrounded and assaulted him as he tried to stop them. Then they dragged him about, having lost all fear, unaware that they were doing wrong. In their drunkenness those monkeys all together scratched that monkey with their claws, bit him with their fangs, and nearly killed him with their slaps and kicks. Then they completely looted that vast grove.

Sarga 60

[1–7] Then that bull among monkeys, Hanumān, foremost of tawny monkeys, addressed them, saying: “Don’t be distracted, monkeys; enjoy the honey-wine!” When Añgada, foremost among tawny monkeys, heard Hanumān’s words, he was delighted at heart, and he replied: “Let the tawny monkeys drink the honey-wine. Since Hanumān has accomplished his mission, I would do anything he says, even something one ought not do. How much more would I do something like this.” When the monkeys heard these words from the mouth of Añgada, they were delighted. Then those bulls among monkeys praised him, crying, “Splendid! Splendid!” After praising Añgada, that bull among monkeys, all the monkeys—swift as the current of a mighty river—rushed back to the Madhuvana. Galvanized by this sanction and by learning that Hanumān had found Maithilī, they entered the Madhuvana and violently attacked the guards. Leaping up, they banded together and began to beat the hundreds of dedicated guardians of the grove there in the Madhuvana.

[8–12] Seizing honeycombs as big as bushels with their arms, they all gathered together. Some broke them open, while the others ate. Some of those monkeys, tawny as honey-wine, drank the honey-wine and scattered the honeycombs. Others, in their drunkenness, pelted one another with beeswax. Still others stood at the foot of the trees, clinging on to the

branches. And then, excessively drowsy with intoxication, they spread some leaves and lay down. Out of their senses and drunk on honey-wine, the leaping monkeys giddily reviled one another and staggered about. Some roared like lions, while other warbled giddily like birds. Some of the tawny monkeys, drunk on honey-wine, passed out on the ground.

[13–17] The guardians of the honey-wine, who had been dispatched by Dadhimukha, had scattered in all directions after being driven back by those terrifying monkeys. The monkeys dragged them by their knees and showed them their posteriors. Greatly upset, the guards went to Dadhimukha and said these words: “Granted leave by Hanumān, these monkeys have violently ravaged the Madhuvana. Then they dragged us by our knees and showed us their posteriors.” The monkey Dadhimukha, guardian of the grove, was furious when he heard that the Madhuvana had been destroyed. He soothed those tawny monkeys, saying: “Come on! Come on! Let’s go! Let us forcibly stop those highly arrogant monkeys, who are drinking up the honey-wine.”

[18–22] Hearing these words of Dadhimukha, those heroic bulls among monkeys together went with him back to the Madhuvana. In their midst Dadhimukha took up a huge tree. Then all those leaping monkeys made a violent charge. Seizing rocks, trees, and boulders, the monkey guardians of the grove rushed angrily to the place where those elephants among monkeys stood. Taking their master’s words to heart, the heroic guardians of the grove, armed with rocks, *sāla* trees, and *tāla* trees, rushed swiftly onward. Thousands of those heroic guardians of the grove, arrogant in their strength, attacked the monkeys as they rested in the trees and on the ground.

[23–26] Now, when those bulls among monkeys led by Hanumān saw that Dadhimukha was enraged, they violently charged him. In a rage, Aṅgada struck his venerable elder with both arms, as the latter—with his great arms and immense strength—rushed upon him, armed with a tree. Blinded by his drunkenness and not realizing, “This is my venerable elder,” Aṅgada failed to recognize him. And so he smashed him to the ground with great force. His arms broken, his face averted, afflicted, and drenched with blood, that heroic elephant among monkeys, Dadhimukha, suddenly lost consciousness for a moment.

[27–32] Managing somehow to free himself from those monkeys, that bull among monkeys reached a secluded spot where he addressed his

assembled servants: “Let them be! We must go to where our master, the thick-necked monkey Sugrīva, is waiting with Rāma. We shall report all of Añgada’s wrongdoing to the king. When he hears what we have to say, he will not stand for it, and he will have these monkeys executed. For great Sugrīva cherished the divine Madhuvana, which had come down to him from father to son and which was forbidden even to the gods. Since they were so greedy for honey-wine, those monkeys are doomed. For surely, Sugrīva will punish them and all their friends with death. These miscreants, who have disobeyed the king’s command, deserve to be put to death. And thus the king’s rage, arising from his lack of forbearance, will accomplish our purpose.”

[33–37] When he had addressed the guardians of the grove in this fashion, mighty Dadhimukha suddenly sprang up and went off with them. In the twinkling of an eye, that forest-dwelling monkey reached the place where the wise monkey Sugrīva, son of the thousand-rayed sun, was waiting. When he spied Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sugrīva, he descended from the sky to the level ground. When the tawny monkey Dadhimukha, the immensely powerful master of the guards, descended, surrounded by all of them, he put on a dejected expression. Then, placing his cupped hands reverently to his head, he pressed his forehead to Sugrīva’s auspicious feet.

Sarga 61

[1–2] When Sugrīva, bull among monkeys, saw the monkey prostrated before him, he was alarmed at heart and he said these words: “Get up! Get up! Why have you fallen at my feet? Have no fear, hero; just tell me the truth.”

[3–10] Reassured in this fashion by great Sugrīva, wise Dadhimukha arose and said these words: “That grove—entrance to which you, Vālin, and Ṛkṣarajas have always prohibited—has been devoured by the monkeys, your majesty. Though they were attacked by these guardians of the grove, who tried to stop them, they paid no heed to them and went on eating and drinking the honey and the honey-wine. Some scattered the leavings, while others ate. When we tried to stop them, they all scowled at us. Thus, the guardians of the grove, although they strove furiously, were driven from that grove by those angry bulls among monkeys. Then, bull among monkeys, my tawny monkeys were routed by many heroic monkeys, their

eyes red with rage. Some were struck with hands, while others were pounded with knees. Those monkeys dragged them about at will and showed them their posteriors. That is how these heroes have been battered, despite the fact that you are their master, while the entire Madhuvana has been devoured at will by those others."

[11–12] As Sugrīva, that bull among monkeys, was being informed in this fashion, wise Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes, asked him: "Your majesty, why has this monkey, the guardian of the grove, presented himself before you? What is the matter that has made him speak so miserably?"

[13–18] Addressed in this fashion by great Lakṣmaṇa, eloquent Sugrīva responded with these words: "Respected Lakṣmaṇa, the heroic monkey Dadhimukha says that the heroic monkeys led by Añgada have drunk up my honey-wine. They would never have acted in such a way unless they had accomplished their mission. Since those monkeys have invaded the grove, they must have accomplished their mission. No doubt the queen has been found and by no one else but Hanumān. For no one other than Hanumān could have been the reason for the success of this mission. For success in any enterprise, intelligence, resolve, strength, and learning are all firmly established in Hanumān, that bull among tawny monkeys. Where Jāmbavān is the leader, Añgada the general, and Hanumān the guiding force, there can be no other outcome.

[19–23] "Dadhimukha reports that those heroic bulls among tawny monkeys, led by Añgada, who have returned after searching the southern quarter, have destroyed the Madhuvana. Having returned, the monkeys have entered the Madhuvana, laying waste and devouring the entire grove, and they have battered the guardians with their knees, driving them all away. It is to report this matter in sweet words that this tawny monkey, known as Dadhimukha and famous for his valor, has come. You must see the matter correctly, great-armed Saumitri. Since all the monkeys have come back and are drinking the honey-wine, Sītā must have been found! If they had not found Vaidehī, bull among men, these renowned forest-dwelling monkeys would never have attacked that divine grove, a gift of the gods."

[24–27] When they heard those words, so pleasant to the ear, that had issued from Sugrīva's mouth, both righteous Lakṣmaṇa and Rāghava were delighted. Both Rāma and illustrious Lakṣmaṇa were exceedingly delighted. Sugrīva too was delighted when he heard those words of

Dadhimukha, and he responded to that guardian of the grove with these words: “I am delighted, my dear friend, that, having accomplished their mission, they have devoured the grove. Such behavior on the part of those who have accomplished their mission must be pardoned, and I have already done so. For along with the two Rāghavas, I wish to see them at once—those monkeys whose leader is Hanumān, who have accomplished their mission, and whose pride is that of the lion, king of beasts. I wish also to hear about the effort to find Sītā.”

Sarga 62

[1–4] Addressed in this fashion by Sugrīva, the monkey Dadhimukha was delighted, and he saluted Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sugrīva respectfully. After he had prostrated himself before Sugrīva and the two powerful Rāghavas, he leapt up into the sky along with his heroic monkeys. Hastening back along the way he had come, Dadhimukha descended from the sky to the ground and entered the grove. Entering the Madhuvana, he saw those ill-mannered leaders of the troops of tawny monkey, who were now sober. They were all voiding the honey-wine in the form of urine.

[5–11] The heroic Dadhimukha approached them, cupping his palms reverentially. He then cheerfully addressed Aṅgada with these conciliatory words: “Dear friend, please do not be angry that these monkeys tried to restrain you. It was merely out of ignorance that the guards angrily tried to stop you, sirs. Mighty prince, you are the crown prince; therefore, you are master of this grove. Please, sir, forgive the offense that—in our foolishness—we committed earlier. Just as your father was formerly the lord of the hosts of tawny monkeys, so now are you and Sugrīva, best of tawny monkeys, no one else. Blameless prince, I have gone and reported the arrival here of all these roamers of the forest to your father’s brother, Sugrīva. He was not angry when he heard about your coming here with the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys and about the despoliation of the grove; indeed, he was delighted. In his delight your father’s brother, King Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys, said, ‘Send them all immediately.’ ”

[12–16] When eloquent Aṅgada, foremost of tawny monkeys, had heard these conciliatory words of Dadhimukha, he said these words to his followers: “Leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys! I suspect that Rāma has already heard the news of our arrival. Since we have accomplished our

mission, it is not fitting that we remain here, scorchers of our foes. Roamers of the forest, we have rested and drunk honey-wine to our heart's content. What is left for us to do here? We should now proceed to where my revered elder Sugrīva is waiting. As to what is to be done, I shall do just as you—acting as a group—instruct me, lords of the troops of tawny monkeys. I am completely at your disposal, sirs. I may be crown prince; but still I am not entitled to order you about. After you have accomplished this mission, it would be highly improper for me to treat you disrespectfully."

[17–21] Even as the forest-dwelling monkeys heard these immortal words that Aṅgada was saying, they were delighted at heart, and they said these words in reply: "Your majesty! Bull among monkeys! What other powerful person would speak in this fashion? Drunk with the arrogance of power, all others think only of themselves. These words, which no one else could have uttered, are so fitting for you. Your humility proclaims the bright future that lies in store for you. All of us have rested and are ready to proceed to where Sugrīva, the immortal lord of the heroic tawny monkeys, is waiting. Unless you tell us to, we tawny monkeys would find it impossible to move even one step from this place, best of tawny monkeys. This is the truth we are telling you."

[22–24] While they were speaking in this fashion, Aṅgada replied, "Very well then, let us go." So saying, he sprang up from the surface of the earth. All the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys followed him as he soared upward, filling the sky like sacred fires blazing up from the sacrifice. Leaping suddenly into the sky, those swift, leaping monkeys gave a thunderous roar, like great storm clouds driven before the wind.

[25–29] While Aṅgada was still on his way, Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys, addressed lotus-eyed Rāma, who was stricken with grief: "Take heart, bless you, there is no doubt that the queen has been found. Otherwise they would not dare to come here after the expiration of the time limit I set. If the mission had failed, the great-armed crown prince Aṅgada, the best of leaping monkeys, would not dare approach me. Even if the other monkeys had acted in such a fashion without having accomplished their mission, he himself would have been dejected, his mind overwhelmed with confusion. Unless he were in an exuberant mood, that lord of leaping monkeys would never have destroyed my Madhuvana. For it has been handed down from father to son and carefully guarded by our forefathers.

[30–33] "Kausalyā has an excellent child in you, Rāma, firm in your vows. Take heart! No doubt the queen has been found and by no one else but Hanumān. For there is no other like him who could have been the reason for the success of this mission. For, O foremost among the wise, success, intelligence, resolve, and strength are as firmly established in Hanumān as is radiant splendor in the sun. Where Jāmbavān is the leader, Aṅgada the general, and Hanumān the guiding force, there can be no other outcome. Now is not the time for you to give way to anxiety, you whose valor is immeasurable."

[34–36] At that moment, a short distance above them, he heard the chattering of the forest-dwelling monkeys, who, as they approached Kiṣkindhā, were screeching in their pride at Hanumān's feat as if to announce their success. When the foremost of the monkeys heard the clamor of the monkeys, he was delighted at heart, curling and uncurling his tail. Placing Aṅgada and the monkey Hanumān at their head, the tawny monkeys rushed onward in their eagerness to see Rāma.

[37–40] Led by Aṅgada, the joyful and exuberant heroes landed near Rāghava and the king of the tawny monkeys. Bowing his head before them, great-armed Hanumān reported to Rāghava that the queen was unharmed and was strictly controlling herself. In great delight, Lakṣmaṇa gazed with great fondness and respect upon Sugrīva, who had been so certain of this outcome with regard to the son of the wind god. And Rāghava, slayer of enemy heroes, who was rejoicing with great delight, gazed upon Hanumān with enormous respect.

Sarga 63

[1–5] After proceeding to Mount Prasravaṇa with its lovely woodlands, the monkeys bowed their heads before Rāma and mighty Lakṣmaṇa. Then, placing the crown prince at their head, and, after having reverently saluted Sugrīva, they began to relate the news concerning Sītā. In Rāma's presence, all the tawny monkeys told of Sītā's imprisonment in the inner apartments of Rāvaṇa, of her being menaced by the *rākṣasa* women, of her devotion to Rāma, and of the time limit that had been set. When Rāma learned that Vaidehī was unharmed, he responded: "Where is Queen Sītā? How is she disposed toward me? Tell me everything concerning Vaidehī, monkeys."

[6–10] Hearing what Rāma had said, the tawny monkeys, there in Rāma's presence, prompted Hanumān, who was the one most knowledgeable about Sītā's situation. When Hanumān heard their words, that eloquent son of Māruta said these words about finding Sītā: "When I had leapt over the ocean, a hundred leagues in breadth, I wandered about in my desire to find Sītā Jānakī until at last I came upon her. On the southern shore of the southern ocean lies Laṅkā, the city of wicked Rāvaṇa. It was there that I found virtuous Sītā in Rāvaṇa's inner apartments. Your lovely wife, Rāma, is surviving only through placing all her hopes on you.

[11–14] "I found her there in the women's grove, guarded by hideous *rākṣasa* women, who menaced her constantly. Imprisoned in Rāvaṇa's inner apartments and closely guarded by the *rākṣasa* women, your virtuous queen, unaccustomed to suffering, is suffering. Dejected, her hair in a single braid, she thinks only of you. She sleeps on the ground; and her body has grown so pale that she resembles a lotus pond at the onset of winter. Her purpose utterly averse to that of Rāvaṇa, she had resolved to die. Still, with great difficulty, Kākutstha, I managed to seek out the queen, whose thoughts are fixed on you alone.

[15–18] "I gradually managed to inspire confidence in her, tiger among men, by praising the fame of the House of Ikṣvāku. I managed to converse with the queen and to reveal to her all that had occurred. When she heard about the alliance between Rāma and Sugrīva, she was delighted. Her virtuous conduct is unshakable, and her devotion is fixed upon you. And that is how I found that virtuous woman, the delight of Janaka. She is wholly occupied with her fierce austerity and her utter devotion to you, bull among men. She provided me with a means of identification, in the form of an episode involving a crow that took place in your presence on Mount Citrakūṭa, wise Rāghava.

[19–23] "Jānakī told me: 'You must tell Rāma, that tiger among men, what you have seen here, omitting nothing, son of Vāyu. And as you are telling him these words, just as I will tell you, in the presence of Sugrīva you must give him this, which I have hidden away with great effort: "Here is my splendid hair ornament, which I have kept hidden for you with great effort. And you must remember my *tilaka* mark of red arsenic. I am sending you this splendid jewel, born from the sea. When I look upon it in my trouble, I rejoice just as if I had seen you, blameless one. I shall live only

for one more month, son of Daśaratha. I cannot live beyond this month since I am in the hands of the *rākṣasas*.'"

[24–26] "Thus did Sītā, emaciated, but utterly righteous in her conduct, and imprisoned in Rāvaṇa's inner apartments, address me, her eyes as wide as a doe's. Now I have told you everything, just as it happened, Rāghava. By all means, you must now devise a way to cross the waters of the ocean." When the son of Vāyu saw that the princes had been reassured, he gave Rāghava that means of identification. Then he fully reported to him everything the queen had told him in due order and in her own words.

Sarga 64

[1–5] When Rāma, son of Daśaratha, had been addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, he clasped the jewel to his heart, and he and Lakṣmaṇa wept. Drawn with sorrow, Rāghava gazed at that splendid jewel. His eyes filled with tears, and he said this to Sugrīva: "Just as a cow in her maternal affection overflows with love for her calf, so does my heart overflow at the sight of this magnificent gem. My father-in-law gave this magnificent gem to Vaidehī when she was a bride. It was fastened on her head so that it would be more lovely still. This gem born from the waters is particularly prized by her family; for it was a gift from wise Śakra, who had been supremely gratified during a sacrifice.

[6–10] "As I gaze upon this superb jewel, dear friend, I see in my mind's eye a vision of my father and of the lord Janaka Vaideha. This gem looked so lovely on the head of my beloved. In seeing it now, I feel as if I had her back. Keep telling me, dear friend, over and over again, exactly what Sītā Vaidehī said, thus sprinkling me with the water of her words, as one might sprinkle with water one who had fainted. What could be more grievous than this, Saumitri, that I should see this jewel born of the waters come back to me without Vaidehī? If Vaidehī can survive for a month, then she will have lived a long time. As for myself, dear friend, I cannot live even for a moment without that black-eyed woman.

[11–15] "Dear friend, you must take me to the place where you found my beloved. Since I have heard news of her, I cannot remain here even a moment longer. How can my fair-hipped lady, who is so excessively timid, survive amidst those dreadful, terrifying *rākṣasas*? Surrounded by those *rākṣasas*, her face surely must have lost its radiance, as does the autumnal

moon when veiled by clouds, its dark spot no longer visible. What did Sītā say, Hanumān? You must tell me truthfully. For that alone can keep me alive, as medicine does a sickly man. What did my lovely, fair-hipped lady, so sweet and sweetly spoken, say, Hanumān? You must tell me. Going from misery to ever greater misery, how can Jānakī survive?"

Sarga 65

[1–4] Addressed in this fashion by great Rāghava, Hanumān related to him everything that Sītā had said: "Queen Jānakī told me this story, bull among men, just as it took place long ago on Mount Citrakūṭa, to serve as a means of identification. Sleeping comfortably by your side, Jānakī awoke first. For a crow had suddenly flown up and injured her between the breasts. You in turn, elder brother of Bharata, had fallen asleep in the lap of the queen. But once again, she said, the bird caused her pain.

[5–8] "Returning yet again, he injured her severely, she said. Then you awoke, spattered with her blood. Scorcher of your foes, she said that though you were sleeping peacefully, the queen awakened you, for the crow would not leave off tormenting her. When you saw that she was wounded between the breasts, great-armed prince, you spoke, hissing in anger like a venomous serpent, 'Who, timorous one, has wounded you between the breasts with his sharp claws? Who is toying with an enraged serpent, its jaws agape?'

[9–13] [i]"Glancing about you, you spied the crow as he perched there watching her, his sharp claws dripping blood. She said that the crow—foremost of flying creatures, who swiftly moved about the earth, equal to the wind in swiftness—was the son of Śakra. Rolling your eyes in anger, you, a great-armed warrior and foremost among the wise, made a harsh decision with respect to the crow. You then plucked a blade of *darbha* grass from your mat and infused it with the power of Brahmā's divine weapon. Like the blazing fire of universal destruction, it blazed up fiercely in the bird's direction. You hurled that flaming blade of grass at the crow. And it pursued him.

[14–17] "Spurned by his father, all the gods, and the great seers, he traversed the triple universe but could find no one to protect him. And as he lay there, fallen to the ground seeking refuge with you who are fit to grant it, Kākutstha, you spared him in your compassion, although he deserved to

die. But, Rāghava, you said: 'A divine weapon can never be employed in vain.' It put out the crow's right eye. And Rāma, after he had made his obeisance to you and King Daśaratha, you dismissed that crow, and he returned to his abode.

[18–23] "Then Sītā said: 'Since you are the foremost master of divine weapons and possess strength and virtue, why, Rāghava, do you not employ your divine weaponry against the *rākṣasas*? Even the great serpents, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, and the hosts of Maruts are unable to stand before you, Rāma. If the mighty man has even the least concern for me, let him slay Rāvaṇa at once in battle with his keenly honed arrows. Or else, why does not the best of men, Lakṣmaṇa Rāghava, scorcher of his foes, rescue me on his brother's orders? Those two mighty tigers among men whose power is equal to that of Vāyu, and Agni, are truly unassailable even by the gods; why then do they ignore me? Surely I must have committed some grave offense, since those scorchers of their foes together, although well able to rescue me, do not do so.'

[24–29] "When I heard Vaidehī's piteous words—so tearfully spoken—I addressed that noble lady once more in these words: 'I swear to you by truth itself, my queen, that Rāma is preoccupied with his grieving over you; while Lakṣmaṇa, moreover, is deeply pained at the fact that Rāma is overwhelmed by sorrow. Somehow or other I have managed to find you, my lady. This is no time for sorrow. Lovely lady, you shall soon see the end of your sorrows. The two princes—tigers among men and subduers of their foes—will reduce Laṅkā to ashes in their determination to see you. Once great-armed Rāghava has slain the terrible Rāvaṇa along with all his kinsmen in battle, he will surely take you back to his own city. Blameless lady, please give me some means of identification that Rāma will recognize and that will cheer him.'

[30–36] "Then, mighty prince, after glancing about her in all directions, she unfastened this gem, this splendid hair clip from her garment, and gave it to me. I accepted this heavenly gem on your account, foremost of the Raghus. Then, bowing my head to her, I hastened to return. Seeing that I was determined to go and that I was increasing in size, Janaka's fair daughter, despondent, her face covered with tears, spoke to me in a voice indistinct with weeping: 'Hanumān, you must inquire for me after the well-being of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who resemble lions, as well as Sugrīva, his

ministers, and all the rest. You must see to it that great-armed Rāghava saves me from this ocean of sorrow. When you arrive in the presence of Rāma, you must tell him of the intensity of my sorrow and how I am constantly menaced by the *rākṣasas*. May your journey be successful, heroic tawny monkey!' Those, your majesty, are the sorrowful words that the noble lady Sītā spoke. Reflecting on what I have told you, lion among kings, you must have faith that Sītā is loyal and well."

Sarga 66

[1–6] Continuing, Hanumān said: "In her affection for you, tiger among men, and in her friendly esteem for me, the queen then addressed a further message to me in an agitated manner: 'You must thus address Rāma Dāśarathi in various ways so that he will quickly kill Rāvaṇa in battle and take me back. Stay another day if you please, heroic tamer of your foes. When you have rested in some concealed spot, you can depart tomorrow. For your presence, monkey, would be a moment's respite for hapless me from my profound sorrow. For once you, so valiant, have departed, even if only to return, it is doubtful whether I shall survive. Have no doubt about this. My grief at not being able to see you would only further torment unfortunate me; for I am already overcome with sorrow after sorrow and am in such a dreadful plight.

[7–11] " 'But then, too, hero, there is without question still one serious doubt that hovers before me regarding your allies, the apes and tawny monkeys. Just how will the troops of apes and tawny monkeys and the two sons of the best of men cross the impassable ocean? Three creatures alone possess the power to fly here over the ocean: Garuḍa Vainateya, Vāyu, and you, blameless monkey. Therefore, heroic monkey, tell me what means you foresee for accomplishing this impossible undertaking. For you are the foremost of those who know how to accomplish things. Granted, you are fully capable of carrying out this mission all by yourself, slayer of enemy heroes, and this accomplishment of yours would bring you glory.

[12–15] " 'But if Rāma with his entire army were to recover me after slaying Rāvaṇa in battle and were he then in triumph to bring me back to his own city, that would redound to his glory. Rāghava must not do as the *rākṣasa* did: steal me away from the forest by means of a trick he played on that hero out of fear of him. But if Kākutstha, that tormentor of enemy

armies, were to fill Laṅkā with his own troops and take me away, that would be worthy of him. Therefore, you should arrange it in such a way that the great battle hero demonstrates valor that is worthy of him.'

[16–20] "When I had heard these meaningful, courteous, and reasonable words, I continued with the remaining portion of my own speech: 'The foremost of the leaping monkeys Sugrīva, the mighty lord of apes and tawny monkeys, has made a firm resolve on your behalf, my lady. The tawny monkeys under his command are imbued with valor, strength, and great power; and they move with the swiftness of thought. Their movement —upward, downward, or toward any side—cannot be impeded; and those creatures of measureless power do not shrink from even the greatest tasks. Following the path of the wind, those enormously energetic creatures have many times reverently circumambulated the earth.

[21–24] " 'All the forest-dwelling monkeys are equal, if not superior, to me. Not a single one of those who attend Sugrīva is inferior to me. If I managed to get here, how much easier it will be for those who are more powerful still. After all, one does not send out the best one has to run errands. Lesser folk are sent for that purpose. So enough of this misery, my lady! Banish your grief. The leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys will reach Laṅkā in a single bound. Mounted on my back, those two lions among men, resembling the newly risen sun and moon, will soon come for you, virtuous lady.

[25–29] " 'You will soon see Rāghava, that lionlike slayer of his foes, and you will also see Lakṣmaṇa standing at the gates of Laṅkā, bow in hand. Soon you will see those heroic monkeys assembled here as well. Their weapons are their fangs and claws, their valor is that of lions and tigers, and they resemble elephant lords. Soon you will hear the sound of those extraordinary monkeys, like clouds upon a mountain, roaring on the peaks of Laṅkā's Mount Malaya. Soon you will see Rāghava, subduer of his foes, who has completed his term of exile in the forest, reunited with you and consecrated king in Ayodhyā.' When I had thus soothed the daughter of Janaka Maithila with these auspicious and welcome words, she, who had spoken cheerfully in my presence, became calm, although she was still pained by your sorrow."

The end of the *Sundarakāṇḍa*.

a Emendation: see PVR 5: 307.
b Emendation: see PVR 5: 316.
c Emendation: see PVR 5: 330.
d Emendation: see PVR 5: 340–41.
e Emendation: see PVR 5: 340–41.
f Emendation: see PVR 5: 347.
g Emendation: see PVR 5: 408.
h Emendation: see PVR 5: 408.
i Emendation: see PVR 5: 540–41.

Chapter 6

The *Yuddhakāṇḍa*

Sarga 1

[1–5] When Rāma had heard Hanumān's report, so faithfully rendered, he was delighted and responded in these words: "Hanumān has performed an enormous feat, difficult to accomplish in this world, which no one else on the face of the earth would be able to do, even in his imagination. For apart from Garuḍa and Vāyu I know of no one other than Hanumān who could cross the vast ocean. The citadel of Laṅkā is well guarded by Rāvaṇa and so is unassailable by gods, *dānavas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, great serpents, and *rākṣasas*. Who, relying on his own strength, could possibly enter it and emerge alive? Who, indeed, could enter that unassailable citadel, well guarded by the *rākṣasas*, unless he were so endowed with might and valor as to be the equal of Hanumān?

[6–9] "In thus putting forth his own power, which is commensurate with his valor, Hanumān has performed a truly great service for Sugrīva. A servant who, assigned a difficult task by his master, loyally carries it out is considered to be the best type of servant. A servant, given an assignment, who, even though fit and competent, fails to carry out the business of the king single-mindedly is considered to be the worst type of servant. Given this assignment, Hanumān did what he had to do without disgracing himself. What is more, Sugrīva is satisfied.

[10–12] "The discovery of Vaidehī has preserved powerful Lakṣmaṇa, the House of Raghu, and myself from unrighteousness. But wretched as I am, it pains my heart still more that I cannot, here and now, return a commensurate favor to this bearer of good news. Yet let me give to great Hanumān this embrace, which is all the wealth I have at this time.

[13–16] "Thus far, the search for Sītā has gone well in every regard, but now that we confront the ocean, my mind once again gives way to despair. The ocean, with its vast waters, is impossible to cross. How in the world are all the tawny monkeys going to reach its southern shore? Even though this

news about Vaidehī has been reported to me, what on earth are we to do next to get the tawny monkeys to the farther shore of the ocean?” When great-armed Rāma, the slayer of his foes, had spoken in this fashion to Hanumān, he was distracted by sorrow and fell to brooding.

Sarga 2

[1–4] Then majestic Sugrīva spoke these words to Rāma, Daśaratha’s son, who was stricken with grief, dispelling his sorrow: “Why do you grieve, hero, like some other, ordinary man? Don’t be like that! Abandon your grief, as an ingrate does friendship. I see no grounds for your sorrow, Rāghava, since we have received news, and we know the enemy’s lair. You are resolute, learned in the *śāstras*, wise, and erudite. Give up this reprehensible attitude, Rāghava, as a man of resolute mind does a thought that undermines his purpose.

[5–7] “We shall leap across the ocean infested with huge sharks, scale the battlements of Laṅkā, and slay your enemy! All the undertakings of a person who lacks resolve, who is despondent, and whose mind is overwhelmed by sorrow fail utterly; and so he comes to grief. All the leaders of my troops of tawny monkeys are valorous and powerful. In order to please you, they are determined even to enter the purifying fire.

[8–12] “I am absolutely certain of this; I can tell by their excitement. Rāghava, you must arrange it so that a bridge is constructed such that we may reach the city of the *rākṣasa* king, and that, through my valor, I may slay the enemy and bring back Sītā. From the very moment that we see the city of Laṅkā, set on the peak of Mount Trikūṭa, you may consider Rāvaṇa to be as good as slain in battle. As soon as a bridge to Laṅkā has been built over the ocean and the whole army has crossed over, you may claim victory. For these tawny monkeys are valorous in battle and can take on any form at will. So, your majesty, enough of this craven attitude, so destructive to all endeavors.

[13–16] “In this world, grief saps a man’s valor. But wise Rāma, now is the time for you to resort energetically to strength, which is the proper recourse of a man who relies on valor. For surely, in the case of death or disappearance, grief vitiates all the efforts of great and valorous men like you. You are foremost among the wise and expert in the essence of all the *śāstras*. And together with comrades like me, you must now defeat your

enemy. For I cannot think of anyone in all the three worlds, Rāghava, who can stand before you in battle once you take your bow in hand.

[17–21] "Entrusted to the monkeys, your mission shall not fail. Soon you shall cross the inexhaustible ocean and find Sītā. So enough of giving way to grief, lord of the earth. Unleash your anger! Passive kshatriyas fare badly; but everyone fears the impetuous. It is in order to cross the dreadful ocean, lord of rivers, that you have come here with us. You have a subtle mind, you should consider how to accomplish this. For these tawny monkeys are valorous in battle and can take on any form at will. They will smash their enemies with volleys of boulders and trees. [a]In one way or another, we shall reach Rāvaṇa's abode. And then, what more is to be said? You shall be completely victorious."

Sarga 3

[1–5] When Kākutstha had heard Sugrīva's reasonable speech and grasped its essential meaning, he concurred and then spoke to Hanumān: "Whether by building a bridge or even drying up the ocean, in one way or another, I will be able to cross the sea quickly. Tell me, monkey, how many defenses does the fortress of Laṅkā have? The size of the army, the fortification of the gates, the defensive works of Laṅkā, and the residences of the *rākṣasas*: I wish to know about all of this as if I had seen it for myself. In Laṅkā you were able to reconnoiter carefully and at will. Now you must tell me everything exactly as it is, for you are in every way well qualified to do so."

[6–39*] Upon hearing Rāma's words, Hanumān, son of Māruta and foremost among the eloquent, spoke to him once more in these words: "Listen, and I will tell you everything about the arrangement of the defensive works—how the city of Laṅkā is protected and how it is defended by its troops." [b]When he had spoken in this fashion, the foremost of monkeys began accurately to describe the fearsome nature of the sea, the extraordinary wealth of Laṅkā, the disposition of its massive numbers of troops, and a detailed description of its mounts and vehicles.

[9–14] "The vast city of Laṅkā is joyous and filled with crowds of happy *rākṣasas*. It is full of chariots and rutting elephants. It has four gateways, lofty and broad, whose gates are firmly fastened with massive iron bars. On its ramparts, there are huge and powerful devices for hurling stones. Any enemy force approaching there would be driven back by them. Around the

gateways, the hosts of valorous *rākṣasas* have constructed hundreds of sharp, fearsome hundred-slayers made of black iron and fully deployed. Its rampart is made of gold. It is immense and impossible to scale. Its interior is studded with gemstones, coral, lapis, and pearls. All around it there are moats—deep, fearsome, and menacing—their icy waters full of crocodiles and teeming with fish.

[15–17] "At their gates, there are four extremely long bridges equipped with many huge instruments of war crowded one upon the other. Those bridges protect the city at those points. For should hostile troops approach, they would be cast into the moats on every side by the instruments of war emplaced upon them. One bridge, in particular, is solid, strong, and extremely stable. It is adorned with many pilings and watchtowers, all made of gold.

[18–22] "Rāvaṇa is always in full command of himself, Rāma. Always ready for battle, he is both energetic and vigilant in inspecting his troops. The citadel of Laṅkā is not to be scaled. It is inaccessible even to the gods. It is fearsome with its fourfold defenses: its rivers, mountains, forests, and defensive constructions. It is situated far off, on the other side of the vast ocean. Yet, Rāghava, the sea has no navigable passage there, for the way is all uncharted. Built on a mountaintop, the city is as inaccessible as the city of the gods. Filled with warhorses and elephants, Laṅkā is supremely difficult to conquer. Iron clubs, hundred-slayers, and various other instruments of war adorn Laṅkā, the city of evil-minded Rāvaṇa.

[23–27] "On one side, at the western gate, ten thousand unassailable *rākṣasas* are stationed. They all bear lances and fight with their swords in the vanguard. On the next side, at the southern gate, a hundred thousand *rākṣasas* are stationed along with an army, complete with all four divisions. They too are unsurpassed fighters. Next, at the eastern gate, are stationed a million *rākṣasas*. Bearing shields and swords, they are all adept in the use of every missile. Finally, at the northern gate, ten million *rākṣasas*—chariot-warriors and cavalry—are stationed. They are the sons of noble families and are treated with great respect. The central encampment is garrisoned by ten million unassailable *yātudhānas* and an even greater number of *rākṣasas*.

[28–32] "I have smashed those bridges and filled in the moats. I have burned the city of Laṅkā and leveled its ramparts. By one means or another,

we shall cross the ocean, the abode of Varuṇa. Then you may regard the city of Lañkā as destroyed by the monkeys. Here are Añgada, Dvivida, Mainda, Jāmbavān, Panasa, Nala, and General Nīla. What need have you for the rest of the army? For once, leaping through the air, those monkeys reach Rāvaṇa's great city with its ramparts and palaces, they will bring back Maithilī. You must at once command the entire army to that effect. You must select a propitious moment to set forth."

Sarga 4

[1–6] When truly valorous Rāma of immense blazing energy had duly listened to Hanumān's speech from beginning to end, he said: "I can immediately destroy Lañkā, the city of the fearsome *rākṣasa*, which you have had described. This is the truth I am telling you. I wish to set forth this very moment, Sugrīva, for the sun, maker of day, has reached its zenith, and the propitious juncture called Vijaya is at hand. Moreover, today is the day of the lunar asterism Uttarāphalgunī. Tomorrow the moon will enter the asterism Hasta. So let us set forth, Sugrīva, surrounded by the entire army. The omens that appear to me are auspicious. I shall slay Rāvaṇa and bring back Sītā Jānakī. For the upper lid of my eye is throbbing, foretelling, it seems, victory, the fulfillment of my desire.

[7–14] "Let Nīla, accompanied by one hundred thousand swift monkeys, go in advance of the army to scout the way. General Nīla, you must at once lead your army by a route rich in fruits, roots, and honey and furnished with cool groves and waters. But you must be constantly vigilant and guard the roots, fruits, and water along the way against the evil *rākṣasas*, who might poison them. As your forest-dwelling monkeys leap all around, let them be on the lookout for enemy forces that may be hidden in hollows, swamps, and thickets. Let the mighty lions among monkeys in their hundreds and thousands lead the fearsome vanguard of the army, which resembles the surge of the sea. Let mountainlike Gaja, powerful Gavaya, and Gavākṣa march before them, like haughty bulls before their cows. Let the monkey Ṛṣabha, a bull among monkeys and a lord of the leaping monkeys, march guarding the right flank of the monkey army. And let swift Gandhamādana, as irresistible as an unrivaled war-elephant, march forth commanding the left flank of the monkey army.

[15–17] “I myself shall go forth at the center of the army, mounted on Hanumān, like lord Indra on Airāvata, urging on the vast host. And let Lakṣmaṇa here, who resembles Yama, ender of all things, go forth on Aṅgada, like Kubera, the ruler of the *yakṣas* and lord of wealth, on Sārvabhauma. Let these three, Jāmbavān the mighty king of the apes, Suṣeṇa, and the monkey Vegadarśin, guard the rear.”

[18–20] When he had heard Rāghava’s words, Sugrīva, that bull among monkeys and the commander of the army, gave those orders to the powerful monkeys. Then all the troops of monkeys, eager for battle, leaping up, came bounding swiftly from their caves and mountaintops. Thus honored by the monkey king and Lakṣmaṇa, righteous Rāma, together with his army, set out toward the south.

[21–25] He set out surrounded by tawny monkeys resembling elephants. They numbered in the hundreds, the tens of thousands, the hundreds of thousands, and the tens of millions. The vast host of tawny monkeys followed him as he set forth. Excited and filled with joy, all the leaping monkeys, leaping upward and onward, bellowing, roaring, and howling, marched toward the south under Sugrīva’s command, eating fruit and fragrant honey and carrying huge trees laden with masses of blossoms. In their wild exuberance, they would carry one another about. Then they would suddenly throw down those being carried. Some would fall down, then leap up and knock the others down.

[26–30] In the presence of Rāghava, the tawny monkeys bellowed, “We shall surely kill Rāvaṇa and all the night-roaming *rākṣasas*.” Mighty Ṛṣabha, Nīla, and Kumuda, along with many monkeys, scouted the path ahead of them. In the center marched King Sugrīva, Rāma, and Lakṣmaṇa, those crushers of their foes, surrounded by many powerful and fearsome monkeys. The heroic, tawny monkey Śatabali, surrounded by one hundred million troops, took over the sole supervision and protection of the entire army of tawny monkeys. With their retinues of billions of monkeys, Kesarin, Panasa, Gaja, and mighty Arka each guarded one of the army’s flanks.

[31–36] Then, placing Sugrīva at their head, Suṣeṇa and Jāmbavān, surrounded by many apes, guarded the tail end of the army. And that bull among monkeys Nīla, their heroic general, foremost in leaping, moving swiftly about, guarded the army on every side. The heroes Darīmukha,

Prajañgha, Jambha, and the monkey Rabhasa moved about everywhere, urging the leaping monkeys onward. As they were proceeding in this fashion, those tigers among tawny monkeys, proud of their strength, beheld the magnificent Sahya mountains covered with trees and creepers. That fearsome army of monkeys, vast as the ocean's flood, streamed onward with a mighty roar, like the ocean in its dreadful rush. All those heroic elephants among monkeys who flanked Dāśarathi leapt swiftly onward, like excellent steeds spurred on.

[37–39] [c]As they were being carried along by the two monkeys, the two bulls among men resembled the sun, bringer of light, and moon in conjunction with two great planets. Mounted on Añgada, Lakṣmaṇa, bold and learned in the traditional texts, his quest certain of success, addressed Rāma in a sweet voice: "You will swiftly slay Rāvaṇa and recover Vaidehī, whom he has abducted. Then, your goals accomplished, you will return to prosperous Ayodhyā.

[40–45] "For I perceive significant and auspicious omens in the sky and on earth, Rāghava, all of which presage the success of your quest. An auspicious breeze, favorable and pleasant, is blowing in the direction of the army's march, and birds and wild animals are calling continually with sweet voices. It is clear in all directions, and the sun, maker of day, is bright. The Bhārgava Uśanas is shining with bright rays behind you. The constellation Brahmarāśi is clear, as are the Great Seers, which, shining brightly, all encircle and illuminate Dhruva, the North Star. The royal sage Triśañku, the foremost among the forefathers of our great Ikṣvāku lineage, is shining brightly together with his *purohita*. The twin stars, the two Viśākhās, most significant of constellations for our great Ikṣvāku lineage, shine brightly, boding no ill.

[46–50] "But the constellation of those *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, Mūla, whose regent is Nirṛti, is occluded. Crossed by a nearby comet, it is eclipsed. All of this presages the destruction of the *rākṣasas*. For the constellations of those who are in the grip of death are always occluded by inimical planets at the hour of their doom. The water is clear and sweet; the forest is laden with fruit. Fragrant breezes blow briskly, and the trees are filled with the blossoms of the season. Arrayed in battle formations, my lord, the monkey armies are as resplendent as were the armies of the gods during the battle in which the *asura* Tāraka was slain. Considering these

things, noble brother, you should be pleased.” Thus did Saumitri in his delight speak, reassuring his brother.

[51–54] Then that vast host filled with those tigers among the apes and monkeys—whose weapons were their fangs and claws—advanced, covering all the land. And the dust raised by the monkeys with their fore and hind feet covered the earthly world, blocking out the light of the sun. Day and night the vast host of tawny monkeys marched. Under the protection of Sugrīva, the army was excited and jubilant. Eager for battle, all the monkeys marched swiftly. Anxious to rescue Sītā, they did not rest anywhere, not even for a moment.

[55–56] At length they reached the Sahya and then the Malaya mountains, dense with trees and abounding in all sorts of wild creatures. Viewing the variegated woodlands and the streams and waterfalls, Rāma passed through the Sahya and Malaya ranges.

[57–62] And the leaping monkeys broke down many trees—*campakas*, *tilakas*, mangoes, *aśokas*, *sinduvārakas*, *karavīras*, and *timiśas*. Intoxicated with their strength, the monkeys ate the fruits, fragrant as nectar, roots, and the blossoms of the trees. The monkeys, as tawny as honey, went along happily drinking from the honeycombs, which hung down as big as bushels. And so those bulls among leaping monkeys went on their way, smashing trees and trailing creepers, devastating the lofty hills. Some of the monkeys, exhilarated with the honey-wine, bellowed from the trees. Others climbed up trees, while still others threw themselves down. Covered with those bulls among the tawny monkeys, the earth looked as if it were covered with fields of ripened winter rice.

[63–66] Then, when great-armed Rāma, his eyes resembling blue lotuses, reached Mount Mahendra, he climbed to its summit, which was adorned with trees. And when Rāma, son of Daśaratha, had climbed to the summit, he saw the ocean, the abode of waters, full of turtles and fish. And so at last, having traversed the Sahya range and the great Malaya mountains, they reached the dreadful-sounding sea in good order. Then, descending, Rāma, foremost of those who inspire delight, moved swiftly to a lovely grove near the shore accompanied by Sugrīva and Lakṣmaṇa.

[67–72] Reaching the broad shore, whose stony surface was washed by the surging waves, Rāma spoke these words: “Sugrīva, we have reached the ocean, Varuṇa’s abode. [d]Here and now our earlier concern arises once again.

Beyond this point lies only the boundless ocean, lord of rivers. Without some extraordinary measure, it is impossible to cross it. Therefore, we should camp here and begin now to deliberate as to how the monkey army might reach the farther shore." Thus, upon reaching the sea, did great-armed Rāma, in his torment over the abduction of Sītā, give the order to make camp: "The time has come for us to deliberate about crossing the ocean. No one is to leave his unit for any reason whatsoever, but let some of the monkey heroes go on patrol, for we must find out what hidden dangers lie before us."

[73–76] When Sugrīva, who was accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, had heard those words of Rāma, he had the army make camp on the densely wooded seashore. Spread out along the seashore, the army seemed almost to be a second magnificent ocean, its waters tawny as honey. Anxious to reach the farther shore of the great ocean, those bulls among tawny monkeys entered a grove near the shore and made camp. Having reached the great ocean, the monkey army, watching it churned up by the force of the wind, was thrilled.

[77–82] But as they gazed upon the vast and featureless ocean, abode of Varuṇa, the lair of hosts of *rākṣasas*, the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys gave way to despair. For it was dreadful with its fierce sharks and crocodiles. And now, as the day waned and the night came on, the ocean, Varuṇa's lair, agitated at the rising of the moon, was covered with reflections of its orb. It was swarming with huge crocodiles as powerful as fierce gales and with whales and whale sharks. It was teeming, it appeared, with serpents, their coils flashing. It swarmed with huge creatures and was studded with all sorts of rocks. The abode of *asuras*, it was fathomless, unapproachable, and impossible to cross. Teeming with crocodiles and the coils of great serpents, huge waves rose and fell, churned by the winds. With its great sea serpents glittering, the fearsome ocean, realm of the enemies of the gods, ever as unapproachable as the underworld known as Pātāla, resembled a scattered shower of sparks.

[83–88] The ocean looked just like the sky, the sky just like the ocean. Ocean and sky appeared indistinguishable. For the waters merged into the sky and the sky into the waters. Filled with stars and gems, respectively, they both looked exactly alike. Between the sky with its scudding clouds and the ocean covered with waves passing in succession, not the slightest distinction could be found. Crashing ceaselessly against one another, with a

terrifying roar, the waves of the ocean, lord of rivers, sounded like mighty *bherī* drums in battle. And so the great monkeys gazed upon the wind-whipped sea, the abode of waters. With the roaring of its waters and of its masses of precious stones, it was as if one with the raging gale. Whipped by the wind and swarming with hordes of huge sea creatures, the ocean with its waves appeared to be leaping into the sky in fury. With its surging waves and the roar of its waters, the ocean seemed to have gone mad.

Sarga 5

[1–2] Then Nīla had the army make camp on the northern shore of the ocean, in proper fashion and according to precept, in such a way that it was well ordered and secure on every side. Mainda and Dvivida, those two bulls among monkeys, themselves stood picket duty to protect the army on all sides.

[3–7] Once the army had made camp on the shore of the ocean, lord of rivers and streams, Rāma, seeing Lakṣmaṇa beside him, said these words: "They say that grief diminishes with the passage of time. But bereft as I am of the sight of my beloved, mine only increases day by day. I do not suffer because my beloved is so far away, nor even because she has been abducted. This alone is the source of all my grief: her youth is slipping away. Blow, breeze, where my beloved stays. Touch her and then touch me. For the touching of our limbs now depends on you, as on the moon depends the meeting of our glances. And this too, lodged in my heart, brings torment to my every limb, like poison once swallowed, that, as my darling was being carried off, she must have cried out to me, 'Alas, my protector!'

[8–11] "Night and day my body is consumed by the fire of love, whose fuel is my separation from her and whose towering flames are my constant brooding on her. I shall plunge into the ocean without you, Saumitri, and rest there. For it would be hard for the flame of desire to burn me were I to sleep in its waters. And yet, even though I long for her so much, I can survive just knowing that that lady of the lovely thighs and I still share the same earth. And like a parched rice paddy drawing water from a flooded one, I live on through knowing that she lives.

[12–20] "Oh, when shall I defeat my enemies and gaze once more upon fair-hipped Sītā, her eyes as wide as hundred-petaled lotuses, as if upon splendid Śrī herself? And when shall I once more gently raise and kiss her

lotuslike face with its full and lovely lips, as a sickly person might drink a powerful tonic? And when will her full and close-set breasts, so like the ripe *tāla* fruit, be once more pressed against me, shaking as she laughs? I am the protector of that dark-eyed woman. But now, in the clutches of the *rākṣasas*, like a woman without a protector, she will surely find no one to rescue her. When will she outwit the *rākṣasas*, evade them, and escape, like the crescent of the hare-marked autumnal moon emerging from the midst of dark storm clouds? Although Sītā is naturally slender, she must surely now be truly emaciated what with the grief and fasting attendant upon the reversal of her fortunes. When shall I bury my arrows in the breast of the lord of the *rākṣasas*, so that I may bring Sītā back and thus dispel the anguish of my heart? When will virtuous Sītā, who is like a daughter of the immortal gods, clasp her arms eagerly about my neck, shedding tears of joy? When shall I instantaneously cast off this dreadful sorrow over my separation from Maithilī, as one might a soiled garment?"

[21–22] As wise Rāma was lamenting in this fashion, the sun, bringer of light, set, its radiance fading at the close of day. Consoled by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma performed the evening *sandhyā* rite, still preoccupied with lotus-eyed Sītā and overwhelmed with sorrow.

Sarga 6

[1–5] Meanwhile, when the lord of the *rākṣasas* had inspected the dreadful and terrifying havoc that great Hanumān, the equal of Śakra, had wrought in Laṅkā, he addressed all the *rākṣasas*, his face downcast in humiliation: "Not only has this mere monkey breached and laid waste the impregnable citadel of Laṅkā, he has found Sītā Jānakī as well. This Hanumān has smashed the domed palace, slaughtered the leading *rākṣasas*, and reduced the city of Laṅkā to chaos. What, pray, am I to do? Or what would be an appropriate next step? Please tell me: what would be best for us to do and what would be most effective? Those who are venerable and wise say that counsel is the cornerstone of victory. Therefore, I seek your counsel, mighty warriors, with regard to Rāma.

[6–10] "There are three types of men in this world: the highest, the lowest, and those in between. I will now set forth the merits and demerits of each of them. The highest type of man, they say, is he who first takes counsel with those counselors intent upon his welfare and competent in

counsel, with those friends who share his goals, or with those kinsmen who wish him well, and only then initiates undertakings such that his efforts are in harmony with the will of the gods. The man who stands in between, they say, is he who reflects upon a matter by himself, who by himself directs his thoughts to righteous action, and then carries through those actions by himself. And the lowest type of man is he who, after saying, 'I will do this,' undertakes an action—regardless of its merits and demerits and without relying on the will of the gods—and then fails to carry it through.

[11–14] "Just as men are invariably of three types: the highest, the lowest, and those in between, so also must counsel itself be of the same three types: the highest, the lowest, and that which is in between. The highest type of counsel, they say, is when counselors are consistently of one mind through insight informed by the *śāstras*. The counsel that is known as that which is in between, they say, is when counselors, having adopted many different opinions, subsequently reach unanimity as to how to decide a matter. The lowest type of counsel is when counselors go on debating, one after another, each defending his own position, and no conclusive argument can bring about unanimity.

[15–18] "Therefore, you eminent counselors should agree on some excellent and appropriate counsel for me to follow. I will follow it faithfully. For Rāma will soon march on the city of Laṅkā accompanied by thousands of heroic monkeys in order to blockade us. It is quite clear that by virtue of his power, which is equal to the task, Rāghava will easily cross the ocean together with his younger brother, his troops, and his allies. This being the case and hostilities with the monkeys being imminent, you must counsel me fully concerning the well-being of the city and the army."

Sarga 7

[1–5] Addressed in this fashion by Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, all those mighty *rākṣasas* cupped their hands in reverence and replied to him: "Your majesty, we have a vast army, equipped with iron clubs, javelins, broadswords, lances, and spears. Why then do you give way to despair? Inflicting massive slaughter, you subjugated Kubera, bestower of wealth, who lives on the summit of Mount Kailāsa, surrounded by many *yakṣas*. Despite his boasting of his alliance with Maheśvara, you defeated, in your fury, that powerful world guardian in battle, lord. Slaughtering, baffling, or

capturing the *yakṣa* hosts, you took this flying palace from the summit of Mount Kailāsa.

[6–14] "Seeking an alliance in fear of you, the *dānava* lord Maya gave you his daughter to be your wife, bull among *rākṣasas*. And you subdued and brought under your sway the unassailable *dānava* lord Madhu, arrogant in his might, the bringer of joy to Kumbhīnasī. You went to the underworld known as Rasātala, great-armed hero, where you conquered the great serpents and brought Vāsuki, Takṣaka, Śaṅkha, and Jaṭin under your sway. Then again, lord, you waged war for a year against those powerful and indestructible *dānava* heroes, with their powerful boons, and relying solely on your own might, brought them under your sway, tamer of your foes. And there you also acquired many powers of illusion, lord of the *rākṣasas*. Moreover, great-armed warrior, you defeated in battle the heroic and mighty sons of Varuṇa, who were accompanied by the four divisions of their army. And, your majesty, you plunged into Yama's host, a veritable ocean—with the rod of Mṛtyu as its great crocodile and all studded with islands in the form of *śālmali* trees—and you gained a great victory, warding off Mṛtyu himself. All the worlds were pleased with your brilliant fighting there. This treasure-laden earth was once filled with as many heroic kshatriyas, Śakra's equal in valor, as it is with mighty trees.

[15–16] "This Rāghava is no match for them in battle, whether in courage, virtues, or power, and yet, your majesty, you violently assaulted and slew them, virtually invincible though they were. Your majesty, it is unimaginable that any harm could come to you from such vulgar folk. You ought not entertain any such thought in your heart. You will certainly kill Rāghava."

Sarga 8

[1–5] Then the heroic *rākṣasa* general Prahasta, who looked like a dark storm cloud, cupped his hands in reverence and spoke these words: "Even the gods, *dānavas*, *gandharvas*, *piśācas*, great birds, and mighty serpents are unable to withstand you in battle. What then of mere monkeys? All of us were negligent and overconfident, and thus Hanumān got the better of us. But that forest-ranging monkey will not escape with his life again, so long as I live. I shall rid the entire ocean-girdled earth—its mountains, woods, and forests included—of monkeys. Just command me, sir. And,

night-roaming *rākṣasa*, I shall set a guard against that monkey, so that you shall suffer no harm whatever as a result of your transgression.”

[6–8] Next a *rākṣasa* named Durmukha, in a towering rage, said, “This cannot be tolerated, for it is an attack upon us all! Moreover, this attack on the part of the monkey lord constituted an outrage against the city, the inner apartments, and the majestic lord of the *rākṣasas* himself. This very instant, I shall single-handedly repulse the monkeys, slaying them, even if they should seek refuge in the fearsome ocean, the sky, or the underworld known as Rasātala.”

[9–11] Then, in a towering rage, powerful Vajradaṃṣṭra spoke, seizing his dreadful iron club all smeared with flesh and blood: “Why do you concern yourself with this contemptible and miserable Hanumān, while the formidable Rāma, Sugrīva, and Lakṣmaṇa are close at hand? This very day, with my iron club, I shall single-handedly kill Rāma, together with Sugrīva and Lakṣmaṇa, and then return after routing the host of tawny monkeys.”

[12–16] Then, in a towering rage, the mighty and heroic Nikumbha Kaumbhakarṇi addressed Rāvaṇa, who makes the worlds cry out: “All of you gentlemen can remain here in the company of our great king. I shall single-handedly kill Rāma as well as Lakṣmaṇa.” Next a *rākṣasa* named Vajrahanu, who was like a mountain, licking his chops with his tongue, said these words in anger: “You gentlemen may go about your business as you like, free from care. I shall devour all those leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys by myself. You can amuse yourselves at your leisure, without a care, and drink honey-wine. I shall single-handedly kill Sugrīva as well as Lakṣmaṇa, Aṅgada, Hanumān, and Rāma, their leader in battle.”

Sarga 9

[1–6] Then the *rākṣasas* Nikumbha, Rabhasa, mighty Sūryaśatru, Suptaghna, Yajñakopa, Mahāpārśva, Mahodara, unassailable Agniketu, the *rākṣasa* Raśmiketu, Indrajit—the mighty and immensely powerful son of Rāvaṇa—Prahasta, Virūpākṣa, the mighty Vajradaṃṣṭra, Dhūmrākṣa, Atikāya, and the *rākṣasa* Durmukha, seizing iron clubs, spears, darts, javelins, lances, battle-axes, bows and arrows, and broad, sharp swords, all leapt to their feet in a towering rage and, as if blazing with their fierce energy, addressed Rāvaṇa: “This very day, we shall kill Rāma, as well as

Sugrīva and Lakṣmaṇa, and that contemptible Hanumān, who dared to assault Laṅkā.”

[7–11] But Vibhīṣaṇa stopped them as they all stood there, weapons in hand, and bade them be seated once again. Then, cupping his hands in reverence, he said these words: “The learned have prescribed as appropriate the use of force only on those occasions where one’s object cannot be achieved by means of the other three stratagems, dear brother. And, dear brother, the use of force, even when made judiciously and in accordance with the proper injunctions, succeeds only against those who are off guard, preoccupied, or stricken by misfortune. How then can you all hope to assail someone who is vigilant, intent upon victory, firm in his strength, the master of his anger, and utterly unassailable? Who could have imagined the impossible feat that Hanumān accomplished, leaping across the fearsome ocean, the lord of rivers and streams?

[12–15] “By no means, night-roaming *rākṣasas*, should we rashly underestimate our foes; for their forces and valor are immeasurable. And what offense had Rāma previously committed against the king of the *rākṣasas* that the latter should have abducted that illustrious man’s wife from Janasthāna? Even if Rāma did kill Khara, who was attacking him, in battle, still, all living creatures must strive to the limit of their strength to save their own lives. [e]For this reason Vaidehī constitutes a grave danger to us. She who has been abducted must be surrendered. [f]There is no point in acting merely to provoke a quarrel.

[16–19] “It would therefore not be appropriate for us to engage in pointless hostility with this powerful and righteous man. You must give Maithilī back to him. You must give Maithilī back to him before, with his arrows, he lays waste to our city together with its elephants, its horses, and its myriad precious things. You must give back Sītā before this vast, dreadful, and unassailable army of tawny monkeys storms our Laṅkā. If you do not of your own free will give back Rāma’s beloved wife, the city of Laṅkā and all its valiant *rākṣasas* will surely perish.

[20–22] “As your kinsman, I beseech you. Do as I say. What I am telling you is both salutary and beneficial. You must give Maithilī back to him. You must give Maithilī back to Rāma Dāśaratha before he unleashes for your destruction his massive and unfailing arrows, newly tipped and fletched and resembling the rays of the autumnal sun. Give up your wrath,

so destructive of both happiness and righteousness. Practice righteousness, which is conducive to pleasure and fame. Calm yourself, that we may survive together with our sons and kinsmen. You must give Maithilī back to Dāśaratha."

Sarga 10

[1–5] Although Vibhīṣaṇa had uttered these sound and beneficial words, Rāvaṇa, impelled as he was by his own impending doom, replied with harsh words: "One can live with one's enemy, or even with an enraged venomous serpent, but never with a false friend in the service of one's foes. I know very well the nature of kinsmen all the world over, *rākṣasa*. Kinsmen always take pleasure in one another's hardships. If a man is a leader, competent, learned, righteous in his conduct, and valiant, *rākṣasa*, then his kinsmen will malign him and bring him down. Always affecting pleasure in one's company, they turn on one in times of trouble. Concealing their true feelings, vicious kinsmen are a source of danger.

[6–8] "There are these well-known verses that were sung once upon a time in the Padmavana by some elephants who had seen some men carrying ropes to snare them. Listen to them, as I recite them. 'It is not the fire, the other weapons, or the ropes that put us in danger; it is our own vicious kin intent on their own self-interest that are the real danger to us. For no doubt, it is they who point out the means of capturing us; therefore, we know that the danger presented by one's kin is the most severe of all.'

[9–11] "In cattle there is wealth; in a brahman, self-restraint. In women, there is fickleness; from kinsmen, danger. And that is why, dear brother, you cannot bear it, that I am respected throughout the worlds, that I have attained universal sovereignty, and that I have set my foot on the heads of my enemies. Anyone else, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, who had spoken such words as these, would have died that very moment. To hell with you, you disgrace to our family."

[12–16] Addressed in this fashion with harsh words, Vibhīṣaṇa, who had spoken justly, flew up, mace in hand, along with four other *rākṣasas*. Then, hovering in midair, majestic Vibhīṣaṇa, roused to anger, spoke these words to his brother, the lord of the *rākṣasas*: "You are my brother, your majesty. You can say whatever you like to me, but I will not stand for these false and abusive words of yours. Those who have lost all self-control and are already

under the power of death never accept judicious advice uttered by one who wishes them well, ten-headed Rāvaṇa. It is always easy enough, your majesty, to find men who will say what will please you, but it is hard to find someone who will say or listen to what is unpleasant yet beneficial.

[17–21] “But I could not ignore one who, like a burning house on the verge of destruction, was caught in the noose of Kāla, which carries off all creatures. I would not like to see you slain by Rāma with his sharp arrows, ornamented with gold and resembling blazing fires. For like dikes of sand, even mighty heroes skilled in weapons are destroyed in battle once they fall under the power of doom. So, by all means, take care of yourself and this city with all its *rākṣasas*. Farewell, I am leaving. May you be happy without me. Although I have tried to dissuade you, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, in my desire for your well-being, my words have not found favor with you. For men whose time is at hand, whose lives are at an end, never accept the beneficial advice offered by their friends.”

Sarga 11

[1–5] The moment Rāvaṇa’s younger brother had finished speaking these harsh words to Rāvaṇa, he went to where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were. The monkey lords standing on the ground saw him there in the sky, resembling the peak of Mount Meru and blazing like lightning. When Sugrīva, the wise and unassailable lord of the monkeys, had seen him and his four companions, he deliberated with the monkeys. Then, when they had deliberated for a while, he spoke these excellent words to all the monkeys, Hanumān and the rest: “Look! There can be no doubt that this *rākṣasa* armed with every weapon and accompanied by four *rākṣasas* is approaching in order to kill us.”

[6–7] When they had heard Sugrīva’s words, all those great monkeys picked up *sāla* trees and boulders, and said these words: “Command us at once, your majesty, to kill these evil-minded creatures. Let them fall to the ground slain, their lives cut short.”

[8–15] Now, as they were conversing with one another, Vibhīṣaṇa reached the northern shore and hovered there in the sky. Seeing Sugrīva and the other monkeys, great and wise Vibhīṣaṇa, still hovering in the sky, addressed them in resounding tones: “The evil *rākṣasa* named Rāvaṇa is lord of the *rākṣasas*. I am his younger brother, and I am known as

Vibhīṣaṇa. He abducted Sītā from Janasthāna after killing Jaṭāyus. Now helpless and miserable, she is imprisoned and closely guarded by *rākṣasa* women. With various sound arguments, I repeatedly advised him: 'You must return Sītā to Rāma straightaway.' But although he was given good advice, Rāvaṇa, impelled by his own impending doom, would not accept it, any more than a dying man will take his medicine. He spoke bitter words to me and treated me contemptuously, as if I were a servant. Therefore, I have abandoned my wife and my sons, and I have come seeking refuge with Rāghava. Please inform great Rāghava, the refuge of all the worlds, at once that I, Vibhīṣaṇa, have come to him for shelter."

[16–21] When he had heard these words, swift-striding Sugrīva in the presence of Lakṣmaṇa addressed Rāma with great agitation. "The younger brother of Rāvaṇa, known as Vibhīṣaṇa, along with four other *rākṣasas*, has come seeking refuge with you, sir. You must realize that Rāvaṇa has sent Vibhīṣaṇa as a spy. You always know what is appropriate, but I think it would be appropriate to take him prisoner. Cloaking himself in deception, this *rākṣasa* comes seeking refuge with deceitful intent and with instructions to kill you, once he has gained your trust, Rāghava. He should be put to death with harsh torture together with his ministers. For he is Vibhīṣaṇa, the brother of cruel Rāvaṇa." When, in his agitation, he had spoken in this fashion to eloquent Rāma, the leader of the troops, himself skilled in speech, fell silent.

[22–24] Upon hearing these words of Sugrīva, powerful Rāma said this to Hanumān and the rest of the tawny monkeys who stood near him. "What the king of the monkeys has said regarding Rāvaṇa's younger brother is quite reasonable. You, sirs, have also heard it. When it comes to difficult matters, it is appropriate that one be advised by a friend who is intelligent, virtuous, capable, and eager for one's long-term good fortune."

[25–28] Questioned in this fashion and desiring to act for the best, each of them gave Rāma his own opinion diligently and courteously. "There is nothing in the three worlds that you do not know, Rāghava. But Rāma, out of friendship, you are questioning us in order to show us honor. You are faithful to your vows, heroic, righteous, and firm in valor. You act judiciously, are learned in traditional texts, and trust your friends wholeheartedly. Therefore, let your advisers, who are wise and capable, speak in turn on this matter giving various sound arguments."

[29–33] When they had spoken in this fashion, the tawny monkey wise Aṅgada was the first to speak to Rāghava concerning the interrogation of Vibhīṣaṇa, saying: "Since Vibhīṣaṇa has come to us from the enemy, he must be considered suspect in every way. By no means should we too hastily regard him as worthy of our trust. For treacherous people go about concealing their true intentions, only to strike when they find an opportunity. To trust him would be a great calamity. Only after reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages should one come to a decision. One should accept a person if he is virtuous, but if he is evil one should cast him out. If we find there to be a preponderance of evil in him, we should turn him away without hesitation. But if we should find a preponderance of virtue, then we ought to accept him, your majesty."

[34–40] But then Śarabha, having reflected, said these sensible words: "You must send a spy to him at once, tiger among men. Only after we have dispatched a spy of subtle intellect, and he has conducted an investigation, would it be appropriate to accept Vibhīṣaṇa." But then wise Jāmbavān, after reflecting on the matter with an intellect steeped in the *śāstras*, communicated his view, which was filled with virtues and free from defects: "Vibhīṣaṇa has come at the wrong time and to the wrong place from the wicked lord of the *rākṣasas*, who is resolute in his hostility. Therefore, he is, by all means, to be viewed with suspicion." Next, Mainda, who was eloquent and adept in discerning good and bad policy, spoke, upon reflection, these exceedingly reasonable words: "This Vibhīṣaṇa ought to be interrogated gently and gradually regarding what Rāvaṇa has to say, lord of kings. Once you have accurately determined his intentions, then, upon reflection, you can act according to whether he is good or evil, bull among men."

[41–46] Then the highly cultivated Hanumān, foremost of ministers, spoke the following speech, which was polished, meaningful, mellifluous, and concise: "Even Bṛhaspati himself is incapable of besting you in argument, sir, for you are superior in intellect, capable, and eloquent. Rāma, it is not in order to demonstrate my skill in disputation, my desire to outshine the others, nor out of a wish to prove myself the best, or fondness for the sound of my own voice that I shall say the following truthful words. Rather, your majesty, it is because of the gravity of the situation. I see a serious problem in what your ministers have said regarding the advantages

and disadvantages here: it is impossible to put it into practice. For, on the one hand, we cannot determine whether he is trustworthy unless we employ him, but, on the other hand, it seems to me that it would be a mistake to employ him too hastily. Now as to what your ministers said about the propriety of sending out spies, that strategy is unsuitable in this case, as it lacks any purpose.

[47–51] "It has also been argued: 'Vibhīṣaṇa has come at the wrong time and to the wrong place.' Now there is something I would like to say about this as well. Consider it from my perspective. This is precisely the right time and place. For him to have left an evil person to come over to a virtuous one, in light of their vices and virtues, respectively, that is, having perceived the wickedness in Rāvaṇa and the heroism in you, is perfectly appropriate and in keeping with his excellent judgment. Furthermore, it has been argued that he should be interrogated by undercover agents, your majesty. Here too, I can offer my considered opinion. Any intelligent person who is interrogated would immediately become suspicious of the questions. Thus, a welcome ally, if interrogated deceitfully, would be alienated.

[52–59] "Moreover, your majesty, even for someone who is confident in his own ability, it is impossible immediately to determine the inner feelings of a stranger simply on the basis of what he says about himself. Still, at no time while he was speaking could one observe any signs of a wicked nature. His facial expression, moreover, was composed. For these reasons, I harbor no doubts about him. A deceitful person would not approach so confidently and without hesitation. Moreover, he is well spoken. For these reasons, one should harbor no doubts about him. It is impossible to conceal one's facial expression completely, even if one tries. And it is this that inexorably betrays the hidden intentions of men. Moreover, foremost of those who know what action should be taken, an action that is undertaken promptly and energetically and that is appropriate to the time and place quickly brings success. He has witnessed your mighty undertaking and the vainglory of Rāvaṇa. He has also heard about the killing of Vālin and the royal consecration of Sugrīva. He seeks the kingship for himself, and, with this in mind, he has come here. Keeping all this foremost in mind, it would be appropriate to accept him. I have argued to the best of my ability that the *rākṣasa* is trustworthy. Having heard this, foremost among the wise, you must be the judge of what is to follow."

Sarga 12

[1–3] Now, when Rāma, his mind composed, had heard this speech of Hanumān, son of Vāyu, that unassailable and learned man responded with his own thoughts: “I too have something to say with regard to Vibhīṣaṇa that I would like you, devoted as you are to my welfare, to hear in its entirety. Under no circumstances would I turn away someone who had come to me in friendship, even if he had some flaw. For the virtuous would condemn such conduct.”

[4–7] When Sugrīva, lord of the leaping monkeys, had heard Rāma Kākutstha’s words, he replied to him, motivated by friendship: “Knower of righteousness! Crest-jewel among kings! You are mighty and firmly established in the path of virtue. What wonder is it then that you should speak so nobly! Moreover, my heart knows that Vibhīṣaṇa is virtuous, for he has been thoroughly investigated through inference and on the basis of his probable intentions. Therefore, Rāghava, let the extremely wise Vibhīṣaṇa at once become your ally on an equal basis with us.”

[8–12] When Rāma had heard these words of Sugrīva and had considered them, he replied to that bull among the tawny monkeys in exceedingly beautiful words: “Whether this night-roaming *rākṣasa* be thoroughly evil or virtuous, is he not utterly incapable of causing me even the slightest harm? For, lord of the hosts of tawny monkeys, if I so desired, I could slaughter the *piśācas*, the *dānavas*, the *yakṣas*, and all the *rākṣasas* on earth with the tip of my finger. There is a well-known story about a dove that showed great hospitality to an enemy who had come seeking shelter. He even offered him his own flesh. And so, best of monkeys, even a dove took in his wife’s abductor who had come to him. How much more so should a person such as I?

[13–17] “Now listen to these verses, conducive to righteousness, that were chanted long ago by the great and truthful seer Kaṇḍu, son of the seer Kaṇva: ‘For the sake of compassion, scorcher of your foes, one ought never slay a poor wretch who has come for refuge, begging for protection with his hands cupped in reverence, even should he be one’s enemy. Even at the cost of his own life, a magnanimous person should save an enemy who has come for refuge from his enemies, whether he be abject or arrogant. Should one fail to offer this protection to the best of one’s ability and the limits of one’s strength, whether through fear, confusion, or greed, that would be a

sin condemned by all the world. Moreover, if a man who has come seeking refuge should die for want of protection while the person who could have saved him merely looks on, then the former would depart from this world taking with him the latter's good works.'

[18–21] "Thus, it is a serious transgression to fail to protect those who come seeking shelter, for it blocks the path to heaven, destroys one's reputation, and undermines one's strength and valor. So I shall fully carry out Kaṇḍu's excellent advice, for it is righteous, beneficial to one's reputation, and, at the time of one's final reward, it leads one to heaven. I always grant protection to all beings who come to me for shelter, imploring me with the words: 'I place myself in your hands.' Such is my vow. So bring him here, Sugrīva, best of tawny monkeys, for I will grant him protection whether he be Vibhīṣaṇa or Rāvaṇa himself."

[22] Then, having listened to the words of Sugrīva, the lord of men quickly welcomed Vibhīṣaṇa as he had been advised by the lord of the tawny monkeys, just as Indra, smasher of citadels, might welcome Garuḍa, the king of birds.

Sarga 13

[1–6] Once Rāghava had granted him protection, Rāvaṇa's younger brother, bowing humbly, descended from the sky to the earth in great delight accompanied by his devoted followers. Seeking refuge, righteous Vibhīṣaṇa prostrated himself at Rāma's feet along with his four *rākṣasa* companions. Then Vibhīṣaṇa addressed Rāma with words that were righteous, fitting, timely, and delightful: "I am the younger brother of Rāvaṇa, but he has humiliated me. Thus I have come for refuge to you, sir, the refuge of all beings. I have abandoned Laṅkā, my friends, and everything I own. Now, my homeland, my life, and my happiness depend on you, sir. I shall help you kill the *rākṣasas* and assault Laṅkā so long as breath remains in my body, and I shall penetrate their forces."

[7–10] As Vibhīṣaṇa was speaking in this fashion, Rāma embraced him and, in great delight, said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Bring some water from the ocean and, with it, anoint wise Vibhīṣaṇa as king of the *rākṣasas* at once, since I am so pleased with him, bestower of honor." Addressed in this fashion, Saumitri, acting on Rāma's instructions, anointed Vibhīṣaṇa as king there in the midst of the monkey leaders. When the leaping monkeys witnessed

Rāma's graciousness, they suddenly began chattering loudly, crying, "Excellent! Excellent!"

[11–12] Then Hanumān and Sugrīva addressed Vibhīṣaṇa, saying: "How are we to cross the ocean, the imperturbable abode of Varuṇa? Please tell us the means whereby all of us might approach the ocean, lord of streams and rivers, the abode of Varuṇa, so that we might quickly cross over together with our troops."

[13–14] When Vibhīṣaṇa, who knew what was right, had been addressed in this fashion, he replied, saying: "King Rāghava must solicit the help of Samudra. For it was Sagara who caused the great and immeasurable ocean to be dug; therefore, the great ocean ought to carry forward the mission of his kinsman Rāma."

[15–18] When the wise *rākṣasa* Vibhīṣaṇa had spoken in this fashion, Rāghava, righteous by nature, found what he said to be agreeable. And immensely powerful and skillful Rāma smiled and, in order to honor them, said this to Lakṣmaṇa and Sugrīva, the lord of the tawny monkeys: "This counsel of Vibhīṣaṇa pleases me, Lakṣmaṇa. Now, you, together with Sugrīva, should tell me if it pleases you as well. Sugrīva is always wise, and you yourself are skilled in counsel. The two of you should consider this matter and tell me what pleases you."

[19–23] Addressed in this fashion, the two heroes, Sugrīva and Lakṣmaṇa, responded with these courteous words: "Why, tiger among men, would the advice of Vibhīṣaṇa not please us? For, at this moment, it seems the most feasible plan, Rāghava. Without constructing a bridge across the fearsome ocean, the abode of Varuṇa, even the gods and *asuras* themselves, accompanied by Indra, would be incapable of reaching Laṅkā. We should properly carry out the advice of the heroic Vibhīṣaṇa. Enough of this delay. You should petition Samudra." When Rāma had been addressed in this fashion, he sat down on a bed of *kuśa* grass that had been spread on the shore of the ocean, lord of streams and rivers, like fire, eater of oblations, installed upon an altar.

Sarga 14

[1–3] Three nights passed and still Rāma, keeping strictly to his vow, lay there on a bed of *kuśa* grass spread on the ground. But although Rāma had worshiped him attentively and properly, Sāgara, being obdurate, would not

manifest himself. Then Rāma, the corners of his eyes red in his rage at Samudra, said these words to Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks, who stood nearby:

[4–7] "Lakṣmaṇa, just see the arrogance of this ignoble Samudra, who will not manifest himself, even though I have worshiped him. The virtues of the good—calmness, forbearance, straightforwardness, and kind words—are always taken for signs of weakness by those who lack them. People only respect an evil, insolent person who runs about praising himself and unleashing violence on everyone. Peaceful means can no more lead to fame or glory in this world, Lakṣmaṇa, than they can to victory in the vanguard of battle.

[8–13] "Now, Saumitri, you shall see the ocean, abode of sea monsters, with its waters choked with the dead bodies of those very creatures pierced by my arrows and floating everywhere. Here and now, Lakṣmaṇa, you shall see me cut to pieces the bodies of gigantic fish, the trunks of sea elephants, and the coils of great serpents. Now, launching a powerful assault, I shall with my arrows dry up the ocean together with its fish and sea monsters and its masses of conch and oyster shells. This lord of the ocean, abode of sea monsters, thinks that, because I am endowed with forbearance, I am weak. To hell with forbearance for people like this! Fetch my bow, Saumitri, and my arrows, which are like venomous serpents, for now in my fury I shall convulse the imperturbable ocean. With my arrows, I shall cause the wave-crested ocean, the abode of Varuṇa, which always keeps within its bounds, to overflow them violently."

[14–17] When he had spoken in this fashion, unassailable Rāma, bow in hand and eyes flashing with anger, resembled the blazing fire at the end of a cosmic era. Bending his fearsome bow, he made the world quake with his arrows. He let fly his dreadful shafts as does Indra, of the hundred sacrifices, his *vajras*. Blazing with energy, those swift and excellent arrows plunged into the waters of the sea, terrifying its great serpents. Then, along with a howling gale, there arose a huge and terrifying surge of the ocean, carrying with it sharks and sea monsters.

[18–21] All at once the ocean was covered with garlands of towering waves and filled with conch and oyster shells, its waves shrouded in a vaporous haze. Great serpents and the immensely powerful *dānavas*, who dwell in the underworld known as Pātāla, were in agony, flames shooting

from their mouths and eyes. Suddenly from the ocean, king of rivers, there arose thousands of waves as tall as the Vindhya or Mandara mountains and filled with sharks and sea monsters. Such was the state of the ocean, the repository of all waters: its masses of waves were swirling, its *rākṣasas* and great serpents were terrified, and its huge crocodiles were tossed about.

Sarga 15

[1–2] Then Samudra Sāgara himself arose from the midst of the sea. Rising together with great serpents, flames shooting from their mouths, he resembled the sun, maker of day, rising from the great mountain Meru. His complexion was that of polished lapis, and he was adorned with *jāmbūnada* gold. His garlands and robes were red and his eyes were like lotus petals.

[3–9] Mighty Sāgara first hailed Rāghava, who stood arrow in hand. Then, cupping his hands in reverence, he approached and said: "All the elements, gentle Rāghava—earth, air, ether, water, and fire—must abide by their respective natures. They must follow the eternal path. It is thus my inherent nature to be fathomless and impossible to cross. I tell you that it would violate that nature for me to become shallow. Nor would I for any reason, prince, whether desire, greed, or fear, make solid my waters, abounding with crocodiles and sharks. I shall, however, devise some means that I can tolerate whereby the sea monsters will not attack while the army is crossing, Rāma. Here, gentle Rāma, is the majestic son of Viśvakarman, Nala by name. He is the equal of Viśvakarman and has been granted a boon by his father. This highly energetic monkey must construct a bridge over me. I shall support it, for he is just like his father."

[10–13] When the ocean, that receptacle of waters, had spoken in this fashion, he vanished. Then the mighty Nala, foremost among the monkeys, stood up and said these words to Rāma: "The ocean, that great receptacle of waters, has told you the truth. Relying upon my father's skill, I shall build a bridge across the wide ocean, abode of Varuṇa. Once, on Mount Mandara, Viśvakarman granted my mother a boon. I am the equal of Viśvakarman, for I am his flesh-and-blood son. But I could not proclaim my own virtues without being called upon. Very well, let the bulls among monkeys construct a bridge this very day."

[14–19] Then, with Rāma's permission, all the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys rushed excitedly into the great forest by the hundreds and

the thousands. There those monkeys, bulls among the hosts of tree-dwelling monkeys, resembling mountains, broke down trees and dragged them to the sea. The monkeys filled the sea with bamboo and *sāla*, *aśvakarṇa*, *dhava*, *kuṭaja*, *arjuna*, *tāla*, *tilaka*, *timiśa*, *bilvaka*, *saptaparṇa*, flowering *karṇikāra*, mango, and *aśoka* trees. Holding aloft those tree trunks, with and without their roots, like so many flagstaffs of Indra, the foremost among the tawny monkeys carried off the trees. Heaved up violently by the boulders hurled into it, the water rose into the sky and cascaded down on all sides.

[20–26] Nala constructed a great bridge, ten leagues in width and one hundred in length, right through the middle of the ocean, lord of rivers and streams. Then, in the ocean, the great receptacle of waters, there arose a tumultuous sound from the boulders being hurled into it and the mountains being cast down. The bridge that Nala constructed over the ocean, abode of sea monsters, was as majestic and splendid as the path of the constellation Svātī through the heavens. Then the gods, *gandharvas*, perfected beings, and supreme seers gathered and hovered in the sky, eager to witness that marvel. The leaping monkeys were bounding, bellowing, and leaping. All beings gazed upon that inconceivable, seemingly impossible, and hair-raising marvel: the building of a bridge over the ocean. And so, constructing that bridge over the sea, those hundreds of billions of immensely powerful monkeys reached the farther shore of the ocean, the great receptacle of the waters. Broad, well-built, majestic, smooth-surfaced, and beautifully proportioned, the great bridge resembled a dividing line in the midst of the ocean.

[27–33] Then, mace in hand, Vibhīṣaṇa, together with his ministers, took up his position on the farther shore of the sea in order to ward off the enemy. Carrying his bow, righteous and majestic Rāma marched at the head of the army, accompanied by Sugrīva. Some of the leaping monkeys marched down the center of the bridge, while others moved along the edges; some dove into the water, while others could find no space in which to march. Still others, moving through the sky, flew like great birds. As it crossed, the terrifying army of tawny monkeys drowned out with its loud roar the terrifying roar rising from the ocean. Once the army of monkeys had crossed by means of Nala's bridge, it made camp, together with its king, on the shore in a spot well provided with roots, fruits, and fresh water. When the gods, along with the perfected beings and celestial bards, had

witnessed that marvelous and seemingly impossible feat of Rāma Rāghava, they approached him in the company of the great seers and anointed him, one after the other, with holy water, saying, "May you conquer your enemies, lord of men, and long may you rule the earth and the seas." With various auspicious blessings such as this, they did homage to Rāma, who was honored by gods and men.

Sarga 16

[1–8] When Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, had crossed the ocean with his army, majestic Rāvaṇa addressed two of his ministers, Śuka and Sāraṇa: "A whole host of monkeys has crossed the impassable ocean, and Rāma has done something unprecedented in building a bridge across the sea. I would never have believed that a bridge could be built over the ocean. Nonetheless, I must now obtain an accurate count of the monkey army. You two gentlemen must infiltrate the monkey army undetected. There you must accurately determine its size and strength, who the leaders of the leaping monkeys are, which counselors are most highly regarded by Rāma and Sugrīva, which ones lead the way, and which of the leaping monkeys are truly heroic. You must also find out how the bridge was constructed over the ocean, that great body of water, and how the great monkeys are bivouacked. In addition, you must determine the resolve, strength, and weaponry of Rāma and heroic Lakṣmaṇa. Who is the commander of these immensely powerful monkeys? When you have accurately determined all of this, you must return swiftly."

[9–12] When Śuka and Sāraṇa had been instructed in this fashion, those two heroic *rākṣasas* took on the form of tawny monkeys and infiltrated the monkey army. But Śuka and Sāraṇa were unable to count that hair-raising and inconceivably vast host of monkeys. For it filled the mountaintops, caverns, and caves, as well as the shores of the sea, the forests, and the parklands. On every side that vast army was raising a terrifying din. Part of it was crossing the ocean, part had already crossed, while yet another part remained anxious to do so. Part had already made camp, while another was in the process of doing so.

[13–15] Then immensely powerful Vibhīṣaṇa recognized Śuka and Sāraṇa, even though they were disguised. He seized them and then reported to Rāma, saying, "Conqueror of enemy citadels, two spies have come from

Lañkā.” When they saw Rāma, they began to tremble and despaired of their lives. Terrified, cupping their hands in supplication, they addressed him with these words: “The two of us have come here, kind sir, delight of the Raghus, because we were dispatched by Rāvaṇa in order to gather intelligence about your entire army.”

[16–21] When Daśaratha’s son Rāma, who was devoted to the welfare of all beings, had heard this speech of theirs, he smiled and said these words: “If you have finished inspecting the entire army and have carefully examined us, and if you have carried out your mission as you were instructed, then you may return as you please. And you two must enter the city of Lañkā and there address these words of mine exactly as I tell you to the king of the *rākṣasas*, younger brother of Kubera, the bestower of wealth. ‘Now, together with your army and your kinsmen, you may demonstrate as you please the valor on which you relied when you carried off my Sītā. But tomorrow at the proper moment you shall see the city of Lañkā, along with its gates and ramparts as well as the *rākṣasa* army, destroyed by me with my arrows. Muster your forces, Rāvaṇa! For tomorrow at the proper moment I shall unleash my dreadful wrath upon you, just as Vāsava, the wielder of the *vajra*, did upon the *dānavas*.’ ”

[22–29] When Śuka and Sāraṇa had been instructed in this fashion, the two *rākṣasas* returned to the city of Lañkā and addressed the lord of the *rākṣasas*: “Lord of the *rākṣasas*, we were captured by Vibhīṣaṇa, and, although we deserved to die, righteous Rāma of immeasurable power released us the moment he saw us. Those four bulls among warriors—majestic Rāma Dāśarathi, Lakṣmaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, and the powerful Sugrīva, whose valor equals that of great Indra—are as heroic, skilled in weaponry, and firm in their valor as the divine guardians of the worlds. Since they are assembled in one place, they themselves are capable of uprooting the city of Lañkā with its ramparts and gates and hurling it far away, even without all these monkeys. Rāma’s appearance and weapons are such that he will be able to lay waste the city of Lañkā all by himself, even without those other three. And the army, protected by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sugrīva, seemed as if it were completely unassailable even by all the gods and *asuras*. Moreover, this army consists of great forest-dwelling monkeys, who are wildly excited and eager for battle. So enough of this hostility! You must make peace. You must return Maithilī to Daśaratha’s son.”

Sarga 17

[1–3] When King Rāvaṇa had heard the sound words that Sāraṇa had courageously uttered, he replied to him: “Even if the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* should assault me, I would not give up Sītā, not for fear of all the worlds. Now you, my good man, are terrified because the tawny monkeys got the better of you. So now you think it would be best to give back Sītā. But what rival can possibly get the better of me in battle?”

[4–8] When majestic Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, had uttered these harsh words, he ascended to the top of his snow-white palace, many *tālas* in height, in his desire to see for himself. Accompanied by his two spies, Rāvaṇa, beside himself with rage, gazed about him at the ocean, the mountains, and the forests and saw that the land was completely covered with leaping monkeys. As King Rāvaṇa gazed upon that vast army of monkeys, boundless and innumerable, he questioned Sāraṇa: “Which among these monkey leaders are heroic? Which are very powerful? Which ones, filled with great energy, always lead the way in battle? Which ones’ advice does Sugrīva heed? And who are the leaders of the troop leaders? You must tell me all of this, Sāraṇa. Who are the leaders of the leaping monkeys?”

[9–15] Upon hearing these words of the *rākṣasa* lord, who was questioning him, Sāraṇa, familiar with the leaders of the forest-dwelling monkeys, began to describe them. “That monkey who stands bellowing before Laṅkā, surrounded by a hundred thousand troop leaders, and whose mighty roaring makes all of Laṅkā with its ramparts and gateways, its mountains, forests, and groves tremble, is the heroic troop leader named Nīla. He stands at the head of the army of great Sugrīva, lord of all the tree-dwelling monkeys. That powerful one, stretching out his forelegs and stalking the earth on his hind legs, ever showing his fangs toward Laṅkā in his rage, the one who resembles a mountain peak, who is the color of lotus filaments, and who, furious, lashes his tail repeatedly, the sound of which makes, so it seems, the ten directions resound, he is known as Aṅgada, and he has been consecrated crown prince by the monkey king Sugrīva. He is summoning you to battle.

[16–19] “And those bulls among tawny monkeys who are bracing their limbs, roaring and bellowing, leaping up and showing their fangs in rage are dreadful, fierce, of fierce valor, and impossible to withstand. Their

number is ten billion eight hundred thousand. They are the heroic denizens of the sandalwood forest. The one whom they follow is the powerful silver-hued Śveta. Dreadful in his valor, he is eager for battle and expects to crush Laṅkā with his own forces. This wise and heroic monkey is famed throughout the three worlds.

[20–24] "After reporting to Sugrīva, that monkey is now moving swiftly to marshal the monkey army, urging his troops onward. And that monkey, who used to roam the charming mountain on the banks of the Gomatī, Mount Saṃkocana, covered with every sort of tree, is the troop leader called Kumuda. He once ruled a kingdom there. And that one, over there, commanding one hundred million troops, the fur on whose long tail—red, yellow, black, and white—sticks out so far in all directions, is the mettlesome and furious Caṇḍa, dreadful in his actions. He is eager for battle and expects to crush Laṅkā with his own forces.

[25–27] "And the tawny one with the long mane over there, your majesty, who looks like a lion and glares fixedly at Laṅkā as if to scorch it with his gaze is the troop leader named Rambha, who always haunts the Vindhya, Kṛṣṇagiri, and the beautiful Sahya mountains. Three billion leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys follow him as his entourage in order to crush Laṅkā with their tremendous power.

[28–30] "And that one, pricking up his ears and showing his fangs again and again, is the fearless and immensely powerful troop leader Śarabha. He has no fear of death and never flees an opposing host. He, your majesty, haunts the charming Sālveya mountains. He commands a full four million powerful troop leaders, known as the Vihāras, your majesty.

[31–34] "Now, that huge one standing in the midst of monkey heroes, like Vāsava in the midst of the gods, who seems to block out the sky like a storm cloud, is Panasa, the terrifying troop leader of the tree-dwelling monkey lords, who are eager for battle. One can hear his mighty bellowing like the roaring of *bherī* drums, and none can withstand him in battle. He dwells on that splendid mountain Pāriyātra. Five million troop leaders, each with his separate troop, form the entourage of that leader among troop leaders.

[35–40] "The one who stands there like a second Sāgara as an ornament to the fearsome and surging army encamped upon the seashore and who resembles Mount Dardara is the troop leader Vinata. He roams about

drinking from the river Parṇāśā, foremost of rivers. His army consists of six million leaping monkeys. The one challenging you to battle is the troop leader Krathana. The one who is the color of red clay is the powerful monkey known as Gavaya. Expanding his body, he advances toward you in a rage. His entourage consists of seven million, and he expects to crush Laṅkā with his own forces. These, then, are the dreadful and powerful troop leaders and leaders of troop leaders whom none can withstand. They are numberless and can take on any form at will."

Sarga 18

[1–5] "And now, as you survey them, I shall describe to you those troop leaders, who will engage in acts of valor, risking their lives for Rāghava's sake. The one on whose tail the glossy, bristling fur—red, yellow, black, and white, glistening like the rays of the sun—sticks out so far in all directions as it drags across the ground, is the troop leader called Hara, dreadful in his actions. Hundreds and thousands follow in his train, wielding trees. Banding together, they are intent upon scaling the ramparts of Laṅkā. Together with his ten billion immensely powerful monkeys, he is eager to defeat you in battle, conqueror of enemy citadels.

[6–8] "The heroes you see standing before you, like great black clouds, dark as collyrium, of true valor in battle, and, with claws and fangs for weapons, are terrifying and fierce in their anger. As numberless and indistinguishable as grains of sand on the far shore of the sea, they are utterly savage apes, denizens of the mountains, hill country, and rivers, your majesty. They are advancing toward you.

[9–15] "That one, with the dreadful eyes and fearsome looks, your majesty, is the lord of all the apes, the troop leader Dhūmra. Standing in their midst, he looks like Parjanya surrounded on all sides by storm clouds. He dwells on that foremost of mountains Ṛkṣavant, where he drinks the waters of the Narmadā. And there, as huge as a mountain, is his younger brother, the great troop leader among troop leaders, Jāmbavān. He looks just like his brother but surpasses him in valor. Although peaceful by nature and obedient to his superiors, he is unyielding in battle. Wise Jāmbavān rendered great assistance to Śakra during the wars of the gods and *asuras* and has thus received many boons. In his army there are many enormous, shaggy apes of fiery energy, who resemble *rākṣasas* and *piśācas* and have

no fear of death. They scale the mountain peaks and hurl down boulders as vast as huge clouds.

[16–20cd] "And standing there, watched by all the monkeys, is that troop leader among troop leaders, your majesty, the mighty lord of the tawny monkeys Rambha, who with his troops serves thousand-eyed Indra. Although he is standing still, in his eagerness that troop leader appears to be leaping about. And that one who, when he moves, rubs his flanks against a mountain standing a league away and who, when he stretches his body upward, reaches a league in height, is known as Saṃnādana, the grandfather of the monkeys. His form is unsurpassed among creatures that move on four feet. This wise troop leader among troop leaders once fought a battle with Śakra himself and yet was not defeated.

[20ef–24] "Now that one, whose valor when he goes forth in battle is the equal of Śakra's, is the troop leader Krathana, who never boasts on the battlefield. He was fathered long ago by Agni of the black path on a *gandharva* maiden in order to assist the gods, the inhabitants of heaven, in their wars with the *asuras*. This majestic and powerful bull among monkeys dwells on the king of lordly mountains—frequented by many *kinnaras*—which always serves as the delightful pleasure garden of your brother, King Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, and on which he disports himself among *jambū* trees, O lord of the *rākṣasas*. He has come here surrounded by ten billion tawny monkeys. He is eager for battle and expects to crush Laṅkā with his own forces.

[25–28] "And the one upon whom ten million attend is the troop leader Pramāthin, your majesty, impossible to withstand. Keeping in mind the ancient hostility between the elephants and monkeys, he haunts the banks of the Ganges, terrifying the leaders of the elephant herds. As troop leader, commander, and general of the tawny monkeys, he moves along the Ganges River, the daughter of the Himalaya, sleeping in mountain caves. Resorting to Mount Uśīrabīja, the equal of Mount Mandara, that foremost of monkeys takes his pleasure, as does Śakra himself in heaven.

[29–31] "And what you see there, like a cloud raised by the wind, where that great column of dust is swirling copiously, are the dreadful and immensely powerful black-faced langurs. Having witnessed the construction of the bridge, ten million of them follow their troop leader, the

swift langur Gavākṣa, as his entourage in order to crush Laṅkā with their tremendous power.

[32–34] "And there, your majesty, is the foremost among the foremost monkeys, the troop leader Kesarin, who disports himself on the lovely golden mountain whose peaks the great seers never abandon. It is there where the trees, swarming with bees, bear fruit to gratify every desire. He roams about that mountain, the color of which is equal to that of the sun and through the radiance of which the beasts and birds take on that color.

[35–38] "Of the sixty thousand mountains, the most beautiful are the golden mountains. This foremost of mountains stands among them, as do you, blameless one, among the *rākṣasas*. These monkeys—tawny, white, red-faced, honey-yellow—with sharp fangs and claws for weapons, dwell on that highest of mountains. Like lions with their four great fangs, as unassailable as tigers, they are all as fierce as Agni Vaiśvānara or like venomous serpents inflamed with anger. With their long tails arching upward, they resemble rutting elephants. They look like huge mountains, and their roar is like that of mighty storm clouds.

[39–42] "Their mighty commander, standing there in their midst, is renowned throughout the earth, your majesty, by the name Śatabalin. He is eager for battle and expects to crush Laṅkā with his own forces. And there are Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Nala, and the monkey Nīla, each of them surrounded by one hundred million troops. And there are yet other swift and formidable monkeys, inhabitants of the Vindhya mountains, who because of their vast numbers are impossible to count. All of them, your majesty, are enormously powerful. All of them possess bodies that resemble huge mountains. All of them are capable of instantly covering the earth with the mountains they have shattered."

Sarga 19

[1–5] Then, after Śuka had listened to Sāraṇa's speech, he looked out over the whole army and addressed these words to Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*: "Those monkeys—resembling great rutting elephants, banyan trees along the Ganges, or *sāla* trees in the Himalayas—whom you see taking up their positions are powerful and impossible to withstand, your majesty. They can take on any form at will, and they are like the *daityas* and the *dānavas*. Their valor is that of the gods in battle. There are tens of billions of them—

times nine, times five, and times seven, and there are quadrillions and septillions more. They are Sugrīva's followers and Kiṣkindhā is their home. They are tawny monkeys born of the gods and *gandharvas*, and they are able to take on any form at will.

[6–8] "Those two youthful monkeys whom you see standing there looking like gods are Mainda and Dvivida. No one is their equal in battle. With Brahmā's blessing they have partaken of the nectar of immortality, and they thus expect to crush Laṅkā with their tremendous power in battle. And those two whom you see standing beside them, looking like mountains, are Sumukha and Vimukha. They are the sons of Mṛtyu, and they are just like their father.

[9–17] "Now the monkey you see standing over there, like an elephant in rut, is the same one who has already come to Laṅkā and sought out Vaidehī and yourself, lord. Look at him! You have seen this monkey before, and he has now returned. If angered, he could make the ocean itself tremble with his strength. He is the eldest son of Kesarin, but he is called the son of the wind god. He is known as Hanumān, and it is he who leapt over the ocean. Foremost among tawny monkeys, he is endowed with strength and beauty and can take on any form at will. His advance can no more be checked than that of the ever-moving lord, the wind god. They say that once, when he was a child, he grew hungry and, seeing the sun, bringer of light, rising, he swooped down a distance of three thousand leagues, thinking in the arrogance of his strength, 'I shall devour the sun, so that my hunger shall not return.' But failing to reach that divinity, who is beyond the reach of even the gods, seers, and *dānavas*, he fell upon the mountain from behind which the sun, bringer of light, rises. One of that monkey's jaws was slightly broken as he fell on the stone surface. And since this toughened his jaw [*hanu*], he came to be known as Hanumān, 'He of the Powerful Jaw.' I can accurately identify this tawny monkey on the basis of this authoritative account. His strength, beauty, and power are impossible to describe. With his tremendous power, he expects to crush Laṅkā all by himself.

[18–21] "And the dark, lotus-eyed hero next to him is Rāma, the great chariot-warrior of the Ikṣvākus, famed for his valor throughout the world. His righteousness never wavers, nor does he ever transgress it. Foremost among those who know the *vedas*, he knows the *vedas* and Brahmā's divine weapon-spell as well. With his arrows he might rend the heavens and

shatter the mountains. His wrath is like that of Mṛtyu, and his valor like that of Śakra. Sītā, whom you abducted from Janasthāna, is his wife; and so, your majesty, he is advancing upon you in order to give battle.

[22–25] "And standing to his right—the one with a complexion as radiant as pure *jāmbūnada* gold, a broad chest, reddened eyes, and dark, curling hair—is his brother Lakṣmaṇa, as dear to him as life itself. He is skillful in statecraft and in battle, and he is adept in all the *śāstras*. Implacable, invincible, victorious, valorous, intelligent, and powerful, he is Rāma's right arm, like another life breath constantly moving outside his body. He would give his own life for Rāghava's sake, and he expects to slaughter all the *rākṣasas* in battle.

[26–34] "And the one standing on Rāma's left, surrounded by a group of *rākṣasas*, is none other than King Vibhīṣaṇa. He was consecrated as king of Lañkā by the majestic king of kings. And in his rage, he too is advancing toward you for battle. The one whom you see standing in their midst, as unshakable as a mountain, is Sugrīva, the unconquered lord of all the leaders of the tree-dwelling monkeys. In power, glory, intelligence, knowledge, and lineage, he outshines the other monkeys, as does Himalaya all other mountains. With his principal troop leaders, he dwells in the densely forested and inaccessible cavern Kiṣkindhā, which is hidden in a mountain fastness. He is the one whose necklace of a hundred golden lotuses shines so brightly; for Lakṣmī herself, coveted by gods and men, resides in it. Sugrīva acquired that necklace along with Tārā and the everlasting kingship of the monkeys through Rāma, who had slain Vālin. And thus Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, is advancing upon you for battle accompanied by one hundred trillion, ten billion troops. Now that you have seen this army that has come here like some baleful planet, your majesty, you must exert yourself to the utmost so that you may be victorious and not suffer defeat at the hands of your enemies."

Sarga 20

[1–4] Rāvaṇa looked out upon the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys. He saw Vibhīṣaṇa—his own brother—standing at Rāma's side, immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa, the right arm of Rāma, and Sugrīva of terrifying valor, the king of all the monkeys, just as they had been described by Śuka. He was somewhat shaken at heart, yet, flaring up with anger, he reviled the

heroic Śuka and Sāraṇa when they had finished their report. Enraged, his voice choked with anger, he spoke harsh words to Śuka and Sāraṇa, who stood there humbly, hanging their heads.

[5–12] “It is utterly inappropriate for a king’s ministers, dependents after all, to utter words that are displeasing to him when he is able to punish or imprison them. How fitting it is that the two of you should at so inopportune a moment heap praises upon my enemies who have approached in such a menacing fashion to make war upon me! Clearly your attendance upon your teachers, parents, and elders was to no purpose, since you have failed to learn the essence of the science of politics, which should govern your conduct. Or even if you had once learned it, you failed to fully comprehend it. You carry your education as mere mental baggage. With imbeciles such as you for ministers, it is only through sheer luck that I have retained my hold on the kingdom. Have you no fear of death that you say such harsh words to me, your sovereign, whose tongue metes out rewards and punishments? Trees touched by a forest fire may survive, but those whose offenses have incurred the wrath of the king cannot. I would have slain you two wretches, who dare to praise my enemies, had not my rage been softened by your previous acts of service. Go! Get out of my sight! Remembering your past acts of service, I do not wish to kill you. Nevertheless, you two ingrates, who have turned away from my affections, are as good as dead to me.”

[13–19] When Śuka and Sāraṇa had been addressed in this fashion, they were humiliated. Then, saluting Rāvaṇa with invocations of victory, they withdrew. Next, ten-necked Rāvaṇa spoke to Mahodara, who stood near him, saying, “Hurry up and get me some spies who really understand the science of politics.” Then spies, hastening at the king’s command, approached him. They attended upon him with hands cupped in reverence, glorifying him with blessings of victory. Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, then addressed these words to those spies, who were reliable, heroic, devoted, and utterly fearless: “Go forth from here and find out Rāma’s plans. Find out also who have allied themselves with him out of affection and are privy to his counsel. When does he sleep? When does he wake? What else is he planning to do? Come back when you have ascertained all of this accurately and completely. For an enemy whose intentions are discovered by a spy is easily attacked and destroyed in battle by clever kings.”

[20–24] Enthusiastically saying, “So be it,” to the lord of the *rākṣasas*, the spies reverently circumambulated him and went off to where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were. Departing, they concealed themselves near Mount Suvela, where they spied upon Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who were in the company of Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa. But as it happened, the *rākṣasas* who were there were spotted by Vibhīṣaṇa, the righteous lord of the *rākṣasas*, and captured. Beaten by swift and valorous monkeys, they returned to Laṅkā, dazed and breathing hard. Then, approaching ten-necked Rāvaṇa, those mighty night-roaming *rākṣasas*, spies accustomed to serving in foreign lands, reported to him regarding the terrifying army encamped near Mount Suvela.

Sarga 21

[1–3] Then the spies informed the lord of Laṅkā that Rāghava, along with an unassailable army, was encamped near Mount Suvela. When Rāvaṇa had heard from his spies that Rāma had come with a vast army, he became somewhat agitated, and he spoke these words to Śārdūla: “You look pale, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, and you seem despondent. You haven’t by any chance fallen into the clutches of our enraged enemies?”

[4–10] Questioned in this fashion, Śārdūla, stupefied with fear, faintly spoke these words to that tiger among *rākṣasas*: “It is impossible to spy upon those bulls among monkeys, your majesty. For they are valiant, powerful, and under the protection of Rāghava. It is impossible even to speak with them. There is no question of interrogating them. For the paths on every side are guarded by monkeys the size of mountains. The moment I entered, I was recognized. Before I even had a chance to observe the army, I was violently seized by many monkeys and badly wounded. Fiercely pummeled with knees, fists, teeth, and palms, I was paraded about by those tawny monkeys, who are both powerful and relentless. When I had been paraded all around, I was taken to Rāma’s headquarters, stupefied, my senses reeling, my entire body covered with blood. Belabored by the tawny monkeys and pleading with my hands cupped in supplication, I was spared by Rāghava. Truly, I am lucky to be alive.

[11–13] “Rāma has filled in the vast ocean with mountains and boulders and now stands at the very gates of Laṅkā, heavily armed. After releasing me, that immensely powerful warrior arranged his troops in the *garuḍa* formation, and now, completely surrounded by tawny monkeys, he is

advancing on Laṅkā. Soon he will reach the outer walls, and so you must quickly do one of two things: you must either return Sītā to him at once or offer fierce battle.”

[14–18] When Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, had heard those grave words of Śārdūla, he was stricken at heart, but he replied: “Even if the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* should assault me, I would not give up Sītā, not for fear of all the worlds.” Having spoken in this fashion, the immensely powerful Rāvaṇa continued speaking: “You, sir, have spied upon this army. Which of the leaping monkeys in it are truly heroes? What are they like? What are the powers of these unassailable monkeys? Whose sons and grandsons are they? Tell me truthfully, *rākṣasa*. Once I know their strengths and weaknesses, I shall take appropriate action. A person wishing to engage in battle must first take account of the opposing forces.”

[19–23] When the chief spy, Śārdūla, had been addressed in this fashion by Rāvaṇa, he began to speak the following words in Rāvaṇa’s presence: “To begin with, your majesty, there is the son—utterly invincible in battle—of Ṛkṣarajas. Then there is Jāmbavān, the renowned son of Gadgada. There is also the other son of Gadgada. And in addition, there is the son of the *guru* of Indra of the hundred sacrifices. It is his son who single-handedly slaughtered the *rākṣasas*. Then there is righteous and powerful Suṣeṇa, the son of Dharma, and, your majesty, the gracious monkey Dadhimukha, the son of Soma. Then there are Sumukha, Durmukha, and the monkey Vegadarśin. Surely self-existent Brahmā created death in the form of these monkeys.

[24–29] “General Nīla over there is himself the son of Agni, bearer of oblations, and the son of Anila, over here, is famed as Hanumān. That young, powerful, and unassailable Aṅgada is the grandson of Śakra, while powerful Mainda and Dvivida are both sons of the Aśvins. Those five sons of Vaivasvata, who themselves are like Kāla, the ender of all things, are Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, and Gandhamādana. Śveta and Jyotirmukha are both the sons of Sūrya, bringer of light, while the leaping monkey Hemakūṭa is the son of Varuṇa. That foremost among leaping monkeys is heroic Nala, son of Viśvakarman, while swift and valorous Sudurdhara is the son of the Vasus. There are one hundred million of these majestic and heroic monkeys, who are all the sons of gods and are lusting for battle. I am unable to describe the rest.

[30–35] "And that youth whose build is that of a lion is the son of Daśaratha. He is the one who slew Dūṣaṇa, Khara, and Triśiras. There is no one on earth who is equal to Rāma in valor; for he slew Virādha and Kabandha, who was like Yama, the ender of all things. No man on earth is able to recount the virtues of Rāma, who slew all the *rākṣasas* in Janasthāna. And there also is righteous Lakṣmaṇa, resembling a bull elephant. Once, having come into the range of his arrows, not even Vāsava himself could survive. And there is your brother Vibhīṣaṇa, foremost among the *rākṣasas*, who, having received the city of Laṅkā, is devoted to Rāghava's cause. In this way, I have described to you the entire monkey army, which is encamped upon Mount Suvela. You, sir, must now decide what is to be done next."

Sarga 22

[1–4] Meanwhile, in Laṅkā, the spies reported to the king that Rāghava, along with an unassailable army, was encamped near Mount Suvela. When Rāvaṇa had heard from his spies that Rāma had come with a vast army, he became somewhat agitated, and he spoke these words to his ministers: "*Rākṣasas*! Let all my counselors assemble, focusing their thoughts. The time has come for us to take counsel." Upon hearing that command of his, the counselors hurriedly approached. Then he took counsel with his *rākṣasa* ministers.

[5–9] After taking counsel with them as to what was appropriate for them to do next, the unassailable Rāvaṇa dismissed his ministers and entered his own residence. Then, summoning an immensely powerful *rākṣasa* named Vidyujjihva, a master of illusion, Rāvaṇa, himself a great master of illusion, went to where Maithilī was. The lord of the *rākṣasas* addressed Vidyujjihva, master of illusion, saying, "Let us delude Sītā, Janaka's daughter, with an illusion. Night-roaming *rākṣasa*, you must come to me bearing Rāghava's head along with his great bow and arrows—all fashioned through the power of illusion." When he had been addressed in this fashion, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Vidyujjihva responded, "So be it." The king was pleased with him and presented him with a piece of jewelry.

[10–11] Entering the *aśoka* grove, the immensely powerful younger brother of Kubera, bestower of wealth, saw Sītā seated on the bare earth, her face lowered, overcome with sorrow, although she did not deserve it.

Seated there in the *aśoka* grove, thinking only of her lord, she was closely surrounded by horrible *rākṣasa* women.

[12–15] Approaching Sītā and calling out to her in feigned delight, he arrogantly addressed these words to the daughter of Janaka: “I have just now slain in battle your husband, Rāghava, the slayer of Khara, about whom you are wont to speak so boastfully. I have completely undermined your grounds for refusing me and have crushed your pride. As a result of your catastrophic loss, Sītā, you will have to become my wife. Your merit is exhausted and your purpose has failed, you foolish woman, who think yourself so clever. Now you shall hear about your husband’s death, Sītā, which was as dreadful as the slaying of Vṛtra.

[16–21] “Rāghava had come to our shores surrounded by a vast army led by the lord of the monkeys in a futile effort to kill me. When he reached the southern shore of the sea, Rāma made camp with his vast army just as the sun, maker of day, was going down. Then, in the middle of the night, my spies approached that army as it slept peacefully, exhausted from its long march, and spied upon it. And then, in the night, on that very spot where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa lay, Rāma’s army was slaughtered by my own vast army led by Prahasta. Over and over again, the *rākṣasas* raised their weapons—spears, iron clubs, swords, small discuses, staves heavy with iron, streams of arrows, lances, shining mallets and war hammers, clubs, iron cudgels, darts, large discuses, and cudgels—and let them fall upon the monkeys.

[22–29] “Then murderous, deft-handed Prahasta with his huge sword completely severed the head of Rāma, who lay sleeping. Vibhīṣaṇa tried to flee, but, as it happened, he was captured. Then Lakṣmaṇa and all the leaping monkeys were driven off in all directions. Sugrīva, lord of the leaping monkeys, lies there with a broken neck. Hanumān too lies there, slain by the *rākṣasas*, his jaw smashed. Then Jāmbavān, as he leapt up in battle, was stricken at the knees. Pierced by many spears, he was cut down like a tree. Those two bulls among monkeys, Mainda and Dvivida, were also cut down, gasping and wailing, drenched in their own blood. Cut through the middle with a sword, Panasa, destroyer of his enemies, fell thunderously to the ground like a *panasa* fruit. Pierced by many iron arrows, Darīmukha lies in a pit, while the hugely powerful Kumuda, struck by arrows, is moaning. Aṅgada has been attacked and felled by the

rākṣasas, who pierced him with many arrows. Adorned with his armlets, he lies on the ground vomiting blood.

[30–34] "Some of the tawny monkeys, scattered like clouds driven by the force of the wind, are lying about, trampled by elephants, while others have been crushed by row upon row of chariots. Others have fled in terror, being harried from the rear, pursued by the *rākṣasas*, like great elephants by lions. Some have thrown themselves into the ocean, others have taken refuge in the sky. Apes and monkeys, all mixed together, have scampered up trees. On the shores of the sea, in the mountains, and in the forests, many of the yellow-eyed monkeys have been slaughtered by innumerable evil-eyed *rākṣasas*. In this way, your husband, along with his army, was killed by my forces. Here, I have had them bring you his head, dripping with blood and covered with dust."

[35–40] Then unassailable Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, addressed a *rākṣasa* woman so that Sītā could hear him: "Go and fetch Vidyujjihva, that *rākṣasa* of cruel deeds, the very one who has brought the head of Rāghava from the battlefield." Then Vidyujjihva, grasping the head along with the bow, presented himself before Rāvaṇa, bowing his head in reverence. Then King Rāvaṇa addressed the long-tongued *rākṣasa*, Vidyujjihva, who stood close beside him, saying: "Place the head of Dāśarathi before Sītā at once. Let the wretched woman clearly see her husband's final state." Addressed in this fashion, the *rākṣasa* placed that beautiful head before Sītā and swiftly withdrew.

[41–43] But Rāvaṇa threw down the great and shining bow that was famed throughout the three worlds and said this to Sītā: "Here is the bow of your precious Rāma, complete with its bowstring. It was brought here by Prahasta after he slew that human during the night." When he and Vidyujjihva had flung that head and bow upon the ground, Rāvaṇa said to the illustrious daughter of the king of Videha, "You must obey me."

Sarga 23

[1–5] Sītā stared at the head and at that magnificent bow. Recalling the alliance with Sugrīva that had been mentioned by Hanumān and seeing those eyes and that facial complexion that were so like those of her husband—his hair, his forehead, and his splendid crest-jewel—she recognized all those familiar things and was stricken with grief. Shrieking like an osprey,

she reviled Kaikeyī: “I hope you are satisfied now, Kaikeyī! The delight of our family has been slain. You malicious creature! You have destroyed our entire family. In what way did noble Rāma offend Kaikeyī such that she had him exiled from his home to the forest in the barkcloth garments of an ascetic?”

[6–11] When Vaidehī, trembling, had spoken in this fashion, that wretched young woman fell to the ground like a plantain tree that has been cut down. After a moment, she heaved a sigh and regained consciousness. Then the large-eyed woman kissed that head and broke into lamentation. “Alas, great-armed hero, I am undone! For I have pledged myself to one who followed the code of the warrior. I have now been made a widow and so must share this, your final state. When a husband dies first, they say it is because of the wife’s lack of virtue. But even though my conduct has been exemplary, you, who were so virtuous, departed before me. While I, having gone from one sorrow to another, am sunk in an ocean of grief, you, who were trying to rescue me, have now been slain. And, Rāghava, my mother-in-law Kausalyā, bereft of you, her son, is now like a loving cow bereft of her calf.

[12–15] “Your valor was beyond imagination, Rāghava! And yet, the words of those who foretold a long life for you have proven false, for your life has been cut short. Or did your wisdom fail you, even though you were so wise? For Kāla, who creates all beings, leads them inevitably to destruction. How could you, so learned in the science of politics, so knowledgeable about and skillful at strategies for averting disaster, have fallen prey to an unforeseen death? Having fallen into my clutches—I who am the fierce and pitiless Kālarātri, the dark night of universal destruction—you, a lotus-eyed hero, have been thus cut down and carried off.

[16–22] “Abandoning me to my misery, great-armed bull among men, you lie in the embrace of the earth, as if she were a beautiful and beloved woman. And this, hero, is your gold-inlaid bow, so dear to me, which you and I always worshiped so assiduously with fragrances and garlands. Surely, blameless hero, you have now been reunited in heaven with my father-in-law, your father, Daśaratha, and with your other ancestors as well. You have become a shining star in the heavens through the great and pleasing deed that you performed, but thus you now ignore your own lineage, the holy race of royal seers. Why do you not look at me, your

majesty? Why will you not speak to me? It is I, your lifelong companion, whom you took as your wife when I was but a girl and you yourself a mere boy. 'I will be with you forever.' That is what you promised when you took my hand in marriage, Kākutstha. So please recall that to mind and take me, full of sorrow, with you. Why have you abandoned me and gone away, resourceful hero? You have departed from this world to the next, leaving me here, full of sorrow.

[23–27] "Your body was once accustomed to only the finest things and embraced by me alone. Now, surely, it is being dragged and torn apart by beasts of prey. You performed the vedic rites—the *agniṣṭoma* and the rest—with ample fees for the officiants. How is it then that you will be denied the funerary rites by means of the *agnihotra* fire? Kausalyā, sorrowfully longing, will now have to question only Lakṣmaṇa, who, alone among the three of us who set out in exile, will return. And since she will ask him, he will surely have to tell her about the slaughter of the forces of your ally and your own murder in the night by the *rākṣasas*. When she hears that you have been murdered in your sleep and that I am living in the *rākṣasa*'s household, she will die of a broken heart, Rāghava.

[28–32] "But enough of this! Please, Rāvaṇa, let me throw myself upon Rāma's body at once. Do this one truly fine thing: reunite a husband and wife. Join my head with his head, and my body with his body, Rāvaṇa, and I shall follow the path of my great husband. I do not wish to live for even another moment, wicked woman that I am. Once, in my father's house, I heard from some brahmans learned in the *vedas* that women to whom their husbands are dear gain auspicious worlds. What recourse is left for me without him who was possessed of forbearance, self-restraint, renunciation, truth, righteousness, gratitude, and nonviolence toward all creatures?" Thus did that large-eyed lady, the daughter of Janaka, burning with sorrow, lament as she gazed there upon her husband's head and bow.

[33–37] As Sītā was lamenting bitterly in this fashion, a *rākṣasa* sentry approached his master, hands cupped in reverence. After saluting and propitiating Rāvaṇa with the words, "May my lord be victorious," he reported that General Prahasta had arrived, saying: "Prahasta has presented himself with all your ministers. The matter appears to be rather urgent. Therefore, kindly grant them an audience." When ten-necked Rāvaṇa had heard the *rākṣasa*'s message, he left the *aśoka* grove to grant an audience to

his counselors. Deliberating with his counselors as to how he should proceed, he entered his council hall and there, knowing full well the martial valor of Rāma, laid his plans.

[38–42] But no sooner had Rāvaṇa departed than that head and splendid bow vanished. Nonetheless, the lord of the *rākṣasas* went on deliberating with his counselors, fearsome in their valor, as to what action he should take with regard to Rāma. Then Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, who looked like Kāla himself, addressed all the commanders of his troops assembled before him, eager to act on his behalf: "Assemble the troops at once with the loud beating of *bherī* drums sharply struck with drumsticks, but do not tell them why." Then the commanders of the troops, receiving those instructions, said, "So be it." Assembling each his own vast host, they reported to their lord, who was so eager for battle, that they were assembled.

Sarga 24

[1–3] Meanwhile, a certain *rākṣasa* woman named Saramā, a dear friend of her beloved Sītā Vaidehī, seeing that she was utterly confused, came quickly to her side. For as she had been instructed by Rāvaṇa to protect Sītā, who was under guard, and because she was compassionate and firm in her vows, she had become Sītā's friend. Saramā saw that her friend, who had now arisen covered with dirt, like a mare that had been rolling in the dust, was completely bewildered.

[4–8] Firm in her vows, she consoled Sītā out of love for her friend: "Timorous lady, in my love for you, my friend, I overcame my fear of Rāvaṇa, and, concealing myself in a deserted thicket, I overheard everything Rāvaṇa said to you and what you said to him in return. For, wide-eyed lady, I would gladly die for your sake. Then, when the overlord of the *rākṣasas* had departed, Maithilī, I followed after him and learned the whole reason for his agitation. It would be impossible to slay the ever-vigilant Rāma in his sleep. Indeed, no one can kill that tiger among men. Nor would it be possible to kill the monkeys, who use trees as weapons. For they are as fully protected by Rāma as are the divinities by Indra, bull among the gods.

[9–17] "Majestic Rāghava, destroyer of his foes, could not have been slain, Sītā. For his arms are long and muscular and his chest is massive. He is majestic and fierce in valor. He is righteous and powerfully built, a

bowman famed throughout the world. Along with his brother Lakṣmaṇa, that courageous hero always protects himself and others. Skillful, deeply learned in the science of statecraft, and of inconceivable strength and valor, he slaughters the hosts of enemy soldiers. This was just an illusion, perpetrated upon you by that savage master of illusion, whose every thought and deed is reprehensible and who is inimical to all creatures. Put all your grieving behind you. Happiness awaits you. Surely Lakṣmī herself is smiling upon you. Now hear the good news, which will delight you. Rāma has crossed the ocean with an army of monkeys. And now, having reached the southern shore, he is encamped. I myself have seen Kākutstha, who has practically accomplished his mission. Right now, he is standing with Lakṣmaṇa on the seashore guarded by his massed forces. And those swift-footed *rākṣasas* whom Rāvaṇa had dispatched brought back the news that Rāghava has crossed the ocean. Hearing that news, wide-eyed lady, Rāvaṇa, the overlord of the *rākṣasas*, took counsel with all his ministers."

[18–26] Now, while the *rākṣasa* woman Saramā was speaking in this fashion, she and Sītā heard the dreadful sound of the troops fully preparing themselves for war. When Saramā heard the deafening sound of the *bherī* drums resounding with the strokes of the drumsticks, she spoke to Sītā in a sweet voice. "That, timid woman, is the terrifying sound of the *bherī* drum, a call to arms. Listen to its deep sound so like the rumble of storm clouds. Rutting war-elephants are being made ready, while chariot-horses are being yoked. Everywhere armed foot soldiers are forming their ranks. The royal highways are filled with rushing, roaring soldiers, amazing in their appearance, just as the ocean is filled with rushing, roaring torrents of water. Just look at the multicolored radiance arising from the *rākṣasas*' shining weapons, shields, armor, chariots, horses, elephants, and ornaments as they glitter. It looks like a blazing forest fire in the hot season. Listen to the clanging of the bells and the rumbling of the chariots. Listen to the neighing of the warhorses, like the blaring of trumpets. These are the frenzied preparations—tumultuous and hair-raising—of the followers of the *rākṣasa* lord, their weapons held aloft.

[27–31] "Good fortune will favor you, dispelling your sorrow. But fear of Rāma has come upon the *rākṣasas*, lotus-petal-eyed woman, as fear of Vāsava overcame the *daityas*. When your inconceivably valorous husband, who has subdued his anger, has defeated and slain Rāvaṇa in battle, he will

surely take you back. Together with Lakṣmaṇa, your husband will defeat the *rākṣasas*, just as that slayer of his foes, Vāsava, together with Viṣṇu, did his enemies. Soon Rāma will come, and I shall see you seated upon his lap, your enemy slain and all your wishes fulfilled. Lovely lady, once you are reunited and in his tight embrace, you will shed tears of joy on the chest of that broad-chested hero.

[32–36] “Soon, Sītā, my lady, mighty Rāma will unbind the braid—falling to your waist—that you have worn these many months. Once you see his face, my lady, which is like the full moon newly risen, you will abandon these tears born of your sorrow, as a female serpent sheds her skin. Very soon, Maithilī, Rāma will slay Rāvaṇa in battle. Then he, who deserves happiness, will enjoy complete happiness together with you, his beloved. Once you are reunited with Rāma, you will rejoice with that great man, just as the earth does with its ample crops when watered with copious rains. My lady, you must take refuge with Sūrya, maker of day and sustainer of all creatures, who, like a horse, moves swiftly in his orbit, circumambulating the foremost of mountains.”

Sarga 25

[1–4] Thus, with her words, did Saramā bring new life to the confused and suffering Sītā, as do the heavens to the earth with their rains. Then, as a friend desiring what was best for her friend and, with a good sense of timing, she smiled and spoke these timely words: “Dark-eyed lady, I can go and return unseen in order to give Rāma a message from you, informing him that you are safe. For when I traverse the unsupported sky, neither Pavana, the wind god, nor even Garuḍa himself is able to follow my path.”

[5–11] As Saramā was speaking in this fashion, Sītā replied to her in a voice that was sweet, soft, and tinged with her recent sorrow: “You are capable of going to the heavens or even to the underworld known as Rasātala. I know that for my sake you could accomplish even the impossible. But if your mind is set on doing me a favor, you should go to Rāvaṇa, as I wish to know what he is doing now. For that cruel and wicked Rāvaṇa, who makes his foes cry out, is a master of illusion. He robbed me of my senses, as does wine the moment you drink it. He has the terrifying *rākṣasa* women, who constantly stand guard over me, menace and threaten me incessantly. I am fearful and apprehensive and have no peace of mind. I

tremble in fear of him, here in the *aśoka* grove. If you can report to me everything that he may have discussed or decided, then that would be the greatest favor you could do for me."

[12–16] As Sītā was speaking in this fashion, the soft-spoken Saramā, caressing her, replied in words choked with tears. "If that is what you wish, Jānakī, I shall go, and you shall see me when I return after learning your enemy's plans." When she had spoken in this fashion, she proceeded from there to the presence of the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa and eavesdropped on his deliberations with his counselors. Once she had heard and familiarized herself with the evil-minded *rākṣasa*'s decisions, she then swiftly returned once more to the *aśoka* grove. She reentered the grove, where she saw Janaka's daughter waiting for her and looking like the goddess Śrī, robbed of her lotus.

[17–19] When soft-spoken Saramā had returned, Sītā embraced her affectionately and offered her a seat, saying: "Once you are comfortably seated, please report to me accurately everything that the cruel and wicked Rāvaṇa has decided." Addressed in this fashion by the tremulous Sītā, Saramā reported to her all of Rāvaṇa's deliberations with his counselors.

[20–26] "The *rākṣasa* lord was given earnest advice to release you by his own mother and his elder counselor Aviddha, who said: 'You must give back Maithilī to the lord of men with full honor. His amazing deeds in Janasthāna should be sufficient evidence for you. Then, too, there was Hanumān's leaping of the ocean, his finding Sītā, and his slaughter of the *rākṣasas* in battle. What mere human on earth could have brought all this about?' Although his aged counselors and his mother argued with him in this vein at length, he can no more bear to give you up than can a miser his money. He will not give you up, Maithilī, unless he dies in battle. For such is the fixed resolve of that cruel *rākṣasa* and his ministers. That, indeed, is the unwavering resolve he has formed, befuddled as he is by his impending doom. He will have to be completely crushed in battle through the slaughter of the *rākṣasas* and himself. Intimidation alone cannot force him to release you. But with his sharp arrows, Rāma will completely destroy Rāvaṇa in battle, and then, dark-eyed lady, he will take you back to Ayodhyā."

[27–28] At that very moment, the din of the *bherī* drums and conches of the entire army was heard, causing the ground to shake. And when, there in Laṅkā, the servants of the *rākṣasa* king heard the din of the monkey army,

their spirits failed them. Their energies were sapped by despair, and they foresaw no good arising from the crimes of their king.

Sarga 26

[1–4] Thus, to the mingled sound of conches and *bherī* drums, did great-armed Rāma Rāghava, the conqueror of enemy citadels, draw near. Now, when Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, heard that tumultuous sound, he fell to brooding for a while, before turning to his ministers. Then mighty Rāvaṇa, addressing all his ministers, spoke so that the entire assembly hall resounded, saying: "Gentlemen, I have listened to what you have said concerning Rāma's crossing of the ocean, his valor, and the size of his army. But I know that you, sirs, are also truly valorous in battle."

[5–10] Then, after listening to his words, a very wise *rākṣasa* named Mālyavān, the paternal uncle of Rāvaṇa's mother, began to speak: "Your majesty, a king who is well versed in the traditional branches of learning and who acts in accordance with sound policy will long exercise sovereignty and bring his foes under his power. And if he makes peace or war with his enemies at the appropriate times and strengthens his own side, he will thus enjoy broader sovereignty. A king who is weaker than his rival or equal to him in strength should sue for peace. Only one who is stronger should make war, but even he must never underestimate his enemy. Therefore, Rāvaṇa, I would recommend making peace with Rāma. You should give him back Sītā on whose account we are so heavily besieged. All the gods, seers, and *gandharvas* desire Rāma's victory. Therefore, you should not oppose him. You should choose to make peace with him.

[11–15] "The blessed Grandfather Brahmā created two races: that of the gods and that of the *asuras*, who had recourse to righteousness and unrighteousness, respectively. For righteousness is said to be the way of the great gods, Rāvaṇa, while unrighteousness is the way of the *asuras* and the *rākṣasas*. For they say that when righteousness eclipses unrighteousness, that ushers in the golden age, known as the Kṛta. But when unrighteousness eclipses righteousness, that brings on the degenerate Tiṣya Age. In rampaging through the worlds, you trampled glorious righteousness and embraced unrighteousness instead. It is for that reason that your enemies have grown more powerful than we. Grown strong through your reckless

actions, the serpent of unrighteousness is devouring us; while righteousness, which the deities revere, strengthens the forces of the gods.

[16–20] "Doing whatever you pleased in your addiction to sensuality, you have caused great suffering to the firelike seers. Their power is as irresistible as a blazing fire, the purifier. Their minds are purified through their austerities, and they are devoted to the furtherance of righteousness. These twice-born brahmans constantly perform all the different principal sacrificial rites. Reciting the *vedas* aloud, they pour oblations into the sacrificial fire according to the ritual injunctions. Thwarting the *rākṣasas*, they chant the vedic *mantras* because of which all the *rākṣasas* scatter in all directions, like thunderclouds in the hot season. And spreading in all ten directions, the smoke arising from the *agnihotra* rites of those firelike seers saps the energy of the *rākṣasas*. Moreover, the fierce austerities that those sages, firm in their vows, practiced in their various holy places torment the *rākṣasas*.

[21–30] "And observing many different, dreadful omens, I foresee the destruction of all the *rākṣasas*. Thundering deafeningly, dreadful and terrifying storm clouds drench all of Laṅkā with hot blood. Teardrops fall from our weeping mounts, while our battle standards, dusty and discolored, do not shine as brightly as once they did. Beasts of prey, jackals, and vultures keep pouring into Laṅkā, shrieking horrendously as they form into packs. Dark women with deathly white teeth appear before us in dreams laughing wildly, speaking menacingly, and looting houses. Dogs are devouring the *bali* offerings in house after house. Cows are giving birth to donkeys, while rats are mating with mongooses. Cats are mating with tigers, pigs with dogs, *kinnaras* are mating with *rākṣasas* and even with humans. White doves with red feet flutter through the sky impelled by doom and presaging the destruction of the *rākṣasas*. Screeching, '*cīcīkūcī*,' domesticated *śārikas* are flying about, even though they are tethered. Although once tamed, they have become aggressive. Kāla himself, in the form of a terrifying and hideous bald man, all yellow and black, peers into everyone's houses at all hours. These and other evil omens continue to appear.

[31–33] "We truly believe that Rāma is none other than Viṣṇu, who has taken the body of a man. For this Rāghava, so firm in his valor, is surely no ordinary human. Therefore, Rāvaṇa, you should make peace with Rāma, the

king of men, who built that utterly extraordinary bridge across the ocean." When mighty and supremely valorous Mālyavān had spoken these words there among those foremost counselors and had judged the intentions of the *rākṣasa* overlord, he fell silent, watching Rāvaṇa closely.

Sarga 27

[1–5] But ten-faced Rāvaṇa, evil-minded as he was and driven by his doom, could not abide the words of Mālyavān although they had been uttered for his own good. Overwhelmed with anger, he replied to Mālyavān, knitting his brows on his forehead and rolling his eyes in rage, saying: "I shall not listen to these harmful words you have so harshly uttered, thinking them to be beneficial. For you are, in effect, siding with my enemies. What makes you think that this wretched human Rāma, who lives alone in the wilderness, abandoned by his own father, and has been forced to rely on monkeys, is so formidable? And what makes you think that I, the lord of the *rākṣasas* and the terror of the gods, who am in no way lacking in valor, am so weak?

[6–13] "I suspect that you have addressed me so harshly out of resentment of my prowess, sympathy for my enemies, or at the prompting of my foes. For unless he were prompted by an enemy, what wise man learned in the *śāstras* would dare speak so harshly to a powerful man of high station? Besides, after taking Sītā—who, but for the lotus, resembles the goddess Śrī—from the forest, why would I give her back for fear of Rāghava? In a few short days, you will see me slay Rāghava along with Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa, and their tens of millions of monkeys. Even the gods themselves dare not stand before Rāvaṇa in single combat. Whom, then, should he fear in battle? I might be cut in two, but never would I bow down to anyone. This is an innate fault of mine; and it is impossible to overcome one's nature. Even if, somehow or other, Rāma actually built a bridge over the ocean, what is so miraculous about this that it should fill you with fear? And I swear to you truthfully that now that Rāma has crossed the ocean with his army of monkeys, he shall not return alive."

[14–22] Now, when Mālyavān saw that Rāvaṇa was speaking with such agitation and was so angry, he was humiliated and made no reply. Then, after praising the king in the customary fashion with prayers for victory, Mālyavān took his leave and returned to his own dwelling. But as for the

rākṣasa Rāvaṇa, he went on taking counsel and deliberating with his counselors before ordering an unparalleled defense of Laṅkā. He assigned the *rākṣasa* Prahasta to the eastern gate, and immensely powerful Mahāpārśva and Mahodara to the southern gate. He assigned his son Indrajit, the great master of illusion, to the western gate, in the company of many *rākṣasas*. Then, after assigning Śuka and Sāraṇa to the northern gate, he told his counselors, "I shall be there myself." He then stationed the immensely powerful and valorous *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa in the central encampment along with many *rākṣasas*. Thus did that bull among *rākṣasas* complete his arrangements in Laṅkā. Then, being under the power of fate, he considered himself to have accomplished his objective. After he had ordered these elaborate arrangements for the city and dismissed his counselors, he entered his vast and luxurious inner apartments, honored by his hosts of counselors with prayers for victory.

Sarga 28

[1–5] Meanwhile, having entered enemy territory, Rāma, the king of men; Sugrīva, the king of the monkeys; the monkey Hanumān, son of Vāyu; Jāmbavān, the king of the apes; the *rākṣasa* Vibhīṣaṇa; Aṅgada, son of Vālin; Saumitri; the monkey Śarabha; Suṣeṇa and his sons; as well as Mainda, Dvivida, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Kumuda, Nala, and Panasa, took counsel together, saying: "There lies the citadel of Laṅkā, ruled by Rāvaṇa. It is not to be conquered even by the immortal gods along with the *asuras*, great serpents, and *gandharvas*. It is time to take counsel and formulate a plan, keeping the success of our mission foremost in mind. For this is the principal stronghold of Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*."

[6–9] As they were speaking in this fashion, Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvaṇa's younger brother, addressed to them a speech rich in meaning and free from all vulgarity: "My counselors, Anala, Śarabha, Saṃpāti, and Praghasa, have gone to the city of Laṅkā and returned. Turning themselves into birds, they infiltrated the enemy's army. Then, once they had observed the defensive preparations that have been put in place, they all reported back. Now listen to me, Rāma, as I describe to you faithfully the entire defensive preparations of evil-minded Rāvaṇa, just as they have reported it.

[10–18] "Prahasta with his army is stationed at the eastern gate while the immensely powerful Mahāpārśva and Mahodara are at the southern gate.

Rāvaṇa's son Indrajit—accompanied by heroes armed with various weapons and by many *rākṣasas* bearing spears, swords, and bows, and wielding lances and war hammers—is stationed at the western gate. He has with him many thousands of *rākṣasas* with weapons in hand. Rāvaṇa himself, focused and supremely confident and accompanied by many *rākṣasas*, has taken up his position at the northern gate of the city. And Virūpākṣa, along with still more *rākṣasas* and a force armed with lances, swords, and bows, is stationed in the central encampment. Once they had surveyed those garrisons, arranged in that fashion, all my ministers returned as quickly as possible. In the city there are one thousand elephants, ten thousand chariots, twenty thousand horses, and more than ten million *rākṣasas*. Those night-roaming *rākṣasas*—valorous, powerful, and fierce in battle—are at all times the handpicked guard of the *rākṣasa* king. And in order to give battle, an entourage of one million attends upon each one of those *rākṣasas* here, lord of the people."

[19–23] After Vibhīṣaṇa had delivered his account of the activities in Laṅkā as they had been reported by his counselors, he made these concluding comments to Rāma, whose eyes were like lotus petals: "When Rāvaṇa went to war against Kubera, Rāma, six million *rākṣasas*—the equals of evil-minded Rāvaṇa in valor, strength, energy, power, dignity, and pride—marched forth. Please do not be angry with me over this. I am trying to rouse your fury for battle, not alarm you. For with your valor, you are able to defeat even the gods. Once you have arrayed the monkey forces for battle, you, sir, surrounded by this great host with its four divisions, will utterly destroy Rāvaṇa."

[24–30] When Vibhīṣaṇa, the younger brother of Rāvaṇa, had spoken in this fashion, Rāghava uttered these words in order to repulse his enemies: "Let that bull among monkeys, Nīla, surrounded by many monkeys, confront Prahasta at Laṅkā's eastern gate. And let Vālin's son, Aṅgada, accompanied by a large force, attack Mahāpārśva and Mahodara at the southern gate. Meanwhile, let Pavana's son, Hanumān, of boundless vitality, accompanied by many monkeys, force and breach the western gate. I am determined to kill the lord of the *rākṣasas* myself. For that lowly wretch, whose power derives from the gift of a boon, takes delight in harming the hosts of *daityas* and *dānavas*, as well as the great seers, as he rampages through all the worlds oppressing all creatures. Thus, together

with Saumitri, I shall force and breach the northern gate of the city, where Rāvaṇa is stationed with his forces.

[31–34] “Let the powerful king of the monkeys, Sugrīva, Jāmbavān, king of the apes, and Vibhīṣaṇa, the younger brother of the *rākṣasa* lord, take up their positions at the central encampment. Let none of the tawny monkeys take on human form in battle. For this shall be our mark of recognition for the monkey army in battle. The monkey form itself will be the sign of recognition for our own forces. Only the seven of us—my friend Vibhīṣaṇa with his four companions, and I myself, together with my immensely powerful brother Lakṣmaṇa—will, in human form, confront our enemies.”

[35–36] When resolute Rāma had spoken in this fashion to Vibhīṣaṇa in order to secure the success of their mission, he resolved purposefully to ascend Mount Suvela. Then, covering the land with his vast army, wise and great Rāma marched on Laṅkā in great excitement, determined to slay his enemy.

Sarga 29

[1–7] Once Rāma, who was accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, had made up his mind to climb Mount Suvela, he spoke in sweet and polished tones to Sugrīva and to the devoted and righteous Vibhīṣaṇa, the night-roaming *rākṣasa*, who was skillful both in counsel and in action, saying: “Let us all straightaway climb this great mountain Suvela, abounding in hundreds of minerals. For we shall camp there tonight. There we shall survey Laṅkā, the abode of that *rākṣasa*, the evil-minded wretch who stole away my wife to his own undoing. He has no regard for righteousness, proper conduct, or his own high lineage. And so, in his vile *rākṣasa* nature, he has done this contemptible thing. For at the mere mention of that vilest of *rākṣasas*, my anger blazes up, and, because of the transgression of that lowly wretch, I shall have to witness the slaughter of the *rākṣasas*. A single person acting under the power of the noose of Kāla has committed this crime; and because of this despicable offense an entire race must perish.”

[8–12] Speaking in this fashion, Rāma, filled with rage toward Rāvaṇa, ascended Mount Suvela with its lovely slopes to make camp there. Behind him came Lakṣmaṇa, ever vigilant, holding his bow and arrows, intent on deeds of great valor. Behind him climbed Sugrīva with his counselors and

Vibhīṣaṇa as well as Hanumān, Aṅgada, Nīla, Mainda, Dvivida, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Panasa, Kumuda, Hara, and the troop leader Rambha. These and many other swift monkeys, denizens of the mountains, swarmed up Mount Suvela by the hundreds, leaping with the speed of the wind to where Rāghava was.

[13–18] When, after a short time, they had scaled the mountain from all sides, they saw, perched as they were on its summit, a city that seemed to be suspended in the sky. And the leaders of the leader of the troops of monkeys gazed upon splendid Laṅkā, adorned with magnificent gates and ramparts and filled with *rākṣasas*. There the foremost among tawny monkeys saw what appeared to be a second rampart made up of those dark night-roaming *rākṣasas* who were stationed at the base of the city wall. When the monkeys saw those *rākṣasas*, so eager for battle, they all bellowed loudly, as Rāma stood watching. Then, reddened at twilight, the sun set and night came on, illumined by the full moon. Then Rāma, the commander of the forces of the tawny monkeys, received and honored by Vibhīṣaṇa, settled in at his leisure on the summit of Mount Suvela. He was accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa and surrounded by the hosts of the leaders of the monkey troops.

Sarga 30

[1–9] After passing the night on Mount Suvela, those heroic bulls among the tawny monkeys gazed upon the parks and woodlands of Laṅkā. They were level, hospitable, pleasant, broad, long, and charming to look upon. Gazing upon them, the monkeys were wonderstruck. The city of Laṅkā was filled with trees: *campaka*, *aśoka*, *puṃnāga*, *sāla*, and *tāla*. It was screened by groves of *tamāla* trees and surrounded by rows of *nāga* trees. Indeed, with its celestial trees of every kind entwined with creepers and bursting with blossoms on every side—*hintālas*, *arjunas*, *nīpas*, flowering *saptaparṇas*, *tilakas*, *karṇikāras*, and *pāṭalas*—it was as lovely as Indra's city of Amarāvatī. Replete with varicolored blossoms, red and tender leaf buds, dark lawns, and variegated groves, those trees wore their fragrant and enticing flowers and fruits, as people do their jewelry. They looked just like the Caitraratha gardens. Delightful and resembling the Nandana groves, those parklands—charming in every season and filled with bees—were ravishing. It was filled with birds—*natyūhas*, *koyaṣṭibhakas*, and dancing

peacocks. The sweet notes of the *parabhṛta* cuckoo could be heard across the rushing woodland streams.

[10–13] In great excitement and delight, the heroic tawny monkeys, who could take on any form at will, entered those parks and woodlands. These were swarming with bees and filled with birds, constantly enflamed with passion. *Kokilas* flocked in their groves, which resounded with the songs of birds. They were filled with the song of *bhṛṅgarājas* and were swarming with bees. They echoed with the song of *koṇālakas* and resounded with the cries of *sārasa* cranes. And as those immensely powerful monkeys entered, a breeze, fragrant from its contact with the blossoms, began to blow.

[14–17] But with the permission of Sugrīva, some of the troop leaders, notable for their deafening roars, separated themselves from the troops of heroic tawny monkeys and marched toward many-bannered Laṅkā, terrifying birds, frightening deer and elephants, and shaking Laṅkā itself with their roaring. Those immensely swift monkeys crushed the earth under their feet, while clouds of dust rose up suddenly, kicked up by their feet. Frightened by the noise, bears, lions, boar, buffalo, elephants, and deer fled in all ten directions, terrified.

[18–21] There, reaching into the sky, stood one of the lofty summits of Mount Trikūṭa. Covered on all sides with flowers, it seemed to be made of gold. It was bright and lovely to behold, and its breadth was a hundred leagues. It was beautiful, grand, and majestic and impossible for even the birds to reach. It was impossible for men to scale, even in their imagination, let alone in reality. And there, on that peak, stood Laṅkā, under the protection of Rāvaṇa. The citadel was adorned with ramparts of gold and silver and with lofty gateway towers resembling white clouds.

[22–26] Indeed, Laṅkā was as magnificently adorned by its palaces and mansions as are the heavens, Viṣṇu's middle step, with clouds at summer's end. In the city could be seen a palace adorned with a thousand columns, which, seeming to scrape the sky, resembled the peak of Mount Kailāsa. It was the domed palace of the *rākṣasa* lord, and it was the ornament of the city. It was constantly guarded by a full complement of a hundred *rākṣasas*. Thus did Lakṣmaṇa's fortunate elder brother, Rāma, whose objective had been thus far achieved, first gaze, together with the monkeys, upon Rāvaṇa's opulent citadel. Rāma and his vast army looked out upon the city. It was glittering with gems, abounding with defensive works, and adorned

with rows of palaces. Its mighty gates were studded with great defensive engines.

Sarga 31

[1–12] Now, at this juncture, observing various portents, Lakṣmaṇa's elder brother addressed these words to fortunate Lakṣmaṇa: "Lakṣmaṇa, let us secure these cool lakes and woodlands abounding in fruit. We shall make camp here, dividing this massive army into companies and marshaling it in formation. I see signs of a horrendous universal catastrophe near at hand, presaging the annihilation of the heroic apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*. Winds blow fiercely and the earth trembles. The hilltops shake, and the mountains crumble. Frightful and terrible clouds, resembling beasts of prey and thundering ominously, pour down fierce torrents mingled with drops of blood. The evening sky, the color of red sandalwood paste, is deeply ominous. A blazing ball of fire plummets from the sun. Dreadful beasts and birds of ill omen, mournful and with mournful voices, howl at the sun, engendering intense fear. At night the moon glows dully, emitting a dark and reddish glare, just as it might at the end of the world. A faint but menacing corona, crimson and inauspicious, encircles the orb of the sun, while a dark spot is visible on its surface, Lakṣmaṇa. And look, Lakṣmaṇa! The constellations themselves look strange. All of this that appears to us seems to presage the destruction of the world. Crows, kites, and vultures are spiraling downward, while jackals emit loud and inauspicious howls. Therefore, surrounded on all sides by tawny monkeys, we should, this very day, swiftly and without delay attack that citadel, which is protected by Rāvaṇa."

[13–19] As that mighty hero, Lakṣmaṇa's elder brother, was speaking in this fashion to Lakṣmaṇa, he swiftly descended from the mountain peak. And when righteous Rāghava had descended from the mountain, he inspected his troops, who were not to be vanquished by their enemies. Together with Sugrīva, Rāghava, who was a master of timing, prepared the vast army of the monkey king and, at the proper moment, sent them into battle. Then, when the time was right, that great-armed hero, armed with his bow and surrounded by his vast army, led the march toward the citadel of Laṅkā. Vibhīṣaṇa, Sugrīva, Hanumān, Jāmbavān, Nala, the king of the apes, Nīla, and Lakṣmaṇa all followed him. Behind them, a vast army of apes and

forest-dwelling monkeys, covering a huge swath of land, followed Rāghava. By the hundreds, those monkeys, resembling elephants and able to drive off their foes, seized mountain peaks and full-grown trees.

[20–27] In a short time, the two brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, subduers of their foes, reached Laṅkā, the citadel of Rāvaṇa. Garlanded with pennants, adorned with parks and groves, it was lovely with its splendid ramparts. But with its lofty walls and gateways, it seemed impregnable. Urged on by Rāma's words, the forest-dwelling monkeys, following orders, closely besieged the city, which was unassailable even by the gods. Armed with his bow and accompanied by his younger brother, Rāma both guarded and blockaded Laṅkā's northern gate, which was as lofty as a mountain peak. Thus did Rāma, the heroic son of Daśaratha, followed by Lakṣmaṇa, approach the northern gate, where Rāvaṇa was stationed, and begin his siege of the city of Laṅkā, which was guarded by Rāvaṇa. For none other than Rāma was capable of guarding that gate. For with Rāvaṇa stationed there, it was as fearsome as the ocean guarded by Varuṇa. It struck terror into the hearts of the weak. It was guarded on every side by terrifying and well-armed *rākṣasas*, just as is the underworld known as Pātāla by the *dānavas*. And Rāma saw arrayed there many and various stores of weapons and armor belonging to the warriors.

[28–34] Meanwhile, Nīla, the powerful general of the army of tawny monkeys, approached the eastern gate and took up his position there together with Mainda and Dvivida. The very powerful Aṅgada took up his post at the southern gate, along with Ṛṣabha, Gavākṣa, Gaja, and Gavaya. The mighty monkey Hanumān, accompanied by Pramāthin, Praghasa, and other heroes, guarded the western gate. At the same time, Sugrīva stationed himself in the central encampment along with all the foremost among the tawny monkeys, who were as swift as Suparṇa or the wind. And thus, at the place where Sugrīva had stationed himself, three hundred and sixty million illustrious leaders of the monkey troops were encamped, pressing their siege. Acting on Rāma's orders, Lakṣmaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa posted the tawny monkeys by the tens of millions at each of the gates. Then, Sugrīva and Jāmbavān, accompanied by many troops, took up their position in the central encampment, a little to the west of Rāma's post.

[35–39] Seizing trees and mountaintops, those tigers among monkeys, whose fangs were like those of tigers, held their positions, eager for battle.

All of them held their tails erect. All were armed with fangs and claws. All were flexing their variegated limbs. And all their faces were contorted. Some of them were as powerful as ten elephants, and others yet ten times stronger than that, while some were equal in strength to a thousand elephants. Some of them were as powerful as millions of elephants, others were a hundred times as powerful as that. Some of the troop leaders of the tawny monkeys had strength beyond measure. The host of those monkey warriors was as variegated and awe-inspiring as a swarm of locusts.

[40–43] The ground seemed to be completely filled with the monkeys who were encamped before Laṅkā, while the sky was as if covered with those who were still converging on the city. A hundred divisions each of one hundred thousand apes and forest-dwelling monkeys stationed themselves at the gates of Laṅkā, while still more of them swarmed in from every side to fight. The mountain was completely covered on every side by all those leaping monkeys. Meanwhile, an additional ten million marched upon the city. And thus Laṅkā was blockaded on every side by powerful, tree-wielding monkeys, so that not even the wind could enter.

[44–46] Suddenly besieged by monkeys who resembled great clouds and who were equal to Śakra in valor, the *rākṣasas* were dumbfounded. From that huge mass of troops as it marched forth, a deafening roar arose, which was like the sound that might arise from the waters if the ocean itself were to be shattered. That deafening sound shook all of Laṅkā, together with its ramparts, gateways, hills, parks, and woodlands.

[47–50] Under the protection of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa along with Sugrīva, the army was completely unassailable even by all the gods and *asuras*. When Rāghava had deployed his army in this fashion for the destruction of the *rākṣasas*, he once again took counsel with his counselors and arrived at a decision. Fully conversant with the sequential application of the various stratagems and of their consequences, he was eager to move on to the next stage. Abiding by the advice of Vibhīṣaṇa, he called to mind the protocol of kings. Summoning Vālin’s son, Aṅgada, he said this: “Abandoning fear and free from anxiety, my good monkey, you must leap into the city of Laṅkā. Approaching ten-necked Rāvaṇa, you are to address him in my words as follows:

[51–54] “ ‘You have lost your royal majesty, your lordship is at an end. You have lost your wits and doomed yourself. Since, night-roaming

rākṣasa, in your delusion and pride you have committed crimes against the seers, gods, *gandharvas*, *apsarases*, great serpents, *yakṣas*, and kings, surely your arrogance, born of the boon of self-existent Brahmā, will today be humbled. For tormented by the abduction of my wife and bearing the rod of punishment against you, I have encamped at the gates of Lañkā to inflict that punishment upon you. Once I have killed you, *rākṣasa*, you shall attain the realm of the gods, the great seers, and all the royal seers.

[55–61] " 'Now show me the strength, wretched *rākṣasa*, with which you carried Sītā off after first luring me away with an illusion. Unless you hand Maithilī over to me and come to me for refuge, I shall rid the earth of *rākṣasas* with my keen arrows. The foremost of *rākṣasas*, righteous-minded Vibhīṣaṇa, has come over to me. Endowed with majesty, he shall obtain the secure and unchallenged lordship of Lañkā. For since you are unrighteous, unrestrained, wicked, and surround yourself with fools, you cannot possibly continue to enjoy your kingship for even another moment. So gather up your fortitude and, relying on your valor, fight, *rākṣasa*! Then, slain by my arrows in battle, you shall be purified. Even if you were to take the form of a bird, swift as thought, and fly through the three worlds, once you came within the range of my sight, you would not escape alive. Let me tell you something for your own good: Prepare yourself for the next world. Take a good long look at Lañkā. Your life is in my hands.' "

[62–65] When Tārā's son, Añgada, had been addressed in this fashion by Rāma, tireless in action, he leapt into the sky and sped on his way, like Agni, bearer of oblations, incarnate. Reaching Rāvaṇa's palace in an instant, the majestic monkey spied Rāvaṇa calmly seated with his ministers. Landing a short distance from him, that bull among tawny monkeys Añgada, with his golden armlets, stood there like a blazing fire. After first identifying himself in his own words, he then repeated that entire excellent speech of Rāma to Rāvaṇa and his ministers, neither adding nor omitting anything.

[66–70] "I am a messenger of Rāma, the lord of Kosala, tireless in action. I am called Añgada, son of Vālin, perhaps you have heard of me. Rāma Rāghava, the bringer of joy to Kausalyā, says this to you: 'Savage, lowest of men, come out and fight. I am going to kill you along with your counselors, sons, friends, and all your kinsmen. Once you have been slain, the three worlds will be free of your menace. This very day, I shall pluck

you out, thorn that you are in the side of the seers and foe of the gods, *dānavas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, great serpents, and *rākṣasas*. If you do not give back Vaidehī, after first begging her forgiveness and falling at my feet, then, once you have been killed, the kingship shall be Vibhīṣaṇa's.' "

[71–77] As that bull among tawny monkeys was uttering these harsh words, the lord of the host of night-roaming *rākṣasas* was transported with rage. His eyes red with rage, he then repeatedly commanded his ministers, "Seize this fool and kill him!" Upon hearing Rāvaṇa's words, four dreadful night-roaming *rākṣasas*, whose energy was like that of a blazing fire, seized Aṅgada. Tārā's heroic son freely allowed himself to be captured in order to demonstrate his power before the hosts of the *yātudhānas*. Then Aṅgada leapt to the top of the palace, which resembled a mountain peak, carrying with him those *rākṣasas* who clung to his arms like locusts. Shaken loose by his speed, all four *rākṣasas* fell from the sky to the ground right before the eyes of the *rākṣasa* lord. And then, as he landed upon the pinnacle of the palace, lofty as a mountain peak, it crumbled right before the eyes of ten-necked Rāvaṇa.

[78–82] When he had smashed the pinnacle of the palace, he loudly proclaimed his own name, and then, letting out a great roar, he flew off through the sky. Rāvaṇa flew into a towering rage at the assault on his palace. But foreseeing his own destruction, he fell to sighing. But as for Rāma—eager to slay his enemy—he advanced for battle in the company of many leaping monkeys, who roared in their excitement. Then, at Sugrīva's command, the tawny monkey Suṣeṇa—immensely powerful, unassailable, and resembling a mountain peak—surrounded by many monkeys, who could take on any form at will, made a tour of all four city gates, much as the moon passes through the lunar mansions.

[83–86] When the *rākṣasas* saw those hundreds of armies of forest-dwelling monkeys laying siege to Laṅkā and stretching all the way to the sea, some of them were amazed, some were terrified, while others were filled with excitement because of their fervor for battle. Since the entire area between the ramparts and the moat was covered with monkeys, the disheartened *rākṣasas* gazed upon what appeared to be a wall of monkeys. In the midst of that terrifying and tumultuous uproar in the *rākṣasa* capital, the *rākṣasas* took up their mighty weapons and raced about, like the fierce winds at the end of a cosmic era.

Sarga 32

[1–5] Then the *rākṣasas* went straightaway to Rāvaṇa's palace and reported to him that Rāma and the monkeys had laid siege to the city. When the night-roaming *rākṣasa* heard that the city was besieged, he grew furious. After first doubling his defensive arrangements, he climbed up to the terrace of the palace. He saw that Lañkā, together with its hills, parks, and woodlands, was surrounded on all sides by countless troops of tawny monkeys, eager for battle. Seeing the entire land swallowed up by monkeys, he fell to brooding, thinking, "How can they be destroyed?" After brooding for a long time, Rāvaṇa drew upon his fortitude and gazed wide-eyed at Rāghava and the troops of tawny monkeys.

[6–12] As the *rākṣasa* lord stood watching, the armies, division after division, began to scale the walls of Lañkā in order to accomplish Rāghava's most cherished desire. Willing to lay down their lives for Rāma's sake, the red-faced monkeys, shimmering like gold, advanced upon Lañkā armed with *sāla* and *tāla* trees as well as boulders. Those leaping monkeys smashed the lofty tops of palaces and gateway arches with trees, mountaintops, and even their fists. With earth, mountaintops, grass, and timber, the monkeys filled in the moats, which had held clear water. Then other troop leaders with their troops that numbered in the thousands, tens of millions, and billions scaled the walls of Lañkā. Like great bull elephants, the leaping monkeys advanced upon Lañkā, jumping back and forth, roaring, crushing golden archways, and smashing towers that resembled the peaks of Mount Kailāsa.

[13–19] Those leaping monkeys, who could take on any form at will, hurled themselves upon the ramparts of Lañkā, roaring and shouting, "Victory to supremely powerful Rāma and mighty Lakṣmaṇa! Victory to King Sugrīva, who is protected by Rāghava!" Vīrabāhu, Subāhu, and the forest-ranging Nala, leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys, made a breach in the rampart and stationed themselves there. At that juncture, they established a bridgehead. Accompanied by a hundred million tawny monkeys, all with a victorious air, mighty Kumuda stationed himself at the eastern gate, blockading it. The powerful and valorous monkey Śatabali proceeded with two hundred million troops to the southern gate and took up his post there, blockading it. Tārā's father, the powerful tawny monkey

Suṣeṇa, proceeded to the western gate with six hundred million troops and took up his post there, blockading it.

[20–24] Together with Saumitri, mighty Rāma himself and Sugrīva, lord of the tawny monkeys, approached the northern gate and took up their posts, blockading it. At Rāma's side stood the huge langur Gavākṣa. Enormously powerful, mighty, and dreadful to look upon, he was accompanied by ten million troops. Also at Rāma's side stood valorous Dhūmra, crusher of his foes, accompanied by ten million apes of terrifying speed. There too, accompanied by his ministers, stood immensely powerful and valorous Vibhīṣaṇa, girded for war, his mace in hand. Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, and Gandhamādana patrolled swiftly on all sides, guarding the army of tawny monkeys.

[25–28] Then Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, his mind suffused with rage, ordered all of his forces to make an immediate sortie. Urged on by Rāvaṇa, his troops rushed forth in great excitement, like the waves of the great ocean when, at the appointed time, it is filled to overflowing. At that juncture, a horrific battle ensued between the *rākṣasas* and the monkeys, just like the one long ago between the gods and the *asuras*. The dreadful *rākṣasas* slaughtered the monkeys with blazing maces, lances, javelins, and battle-axes, boasting of their valorous deeds.

[29–32] Similarly, the huge and swift monkeys slaughtered the *rākṣasas* with trees, mountaintops, claws, and teeth. Meanwhile, other dreadful *rākṣasas* positioned on the rampart hewed the monkeys on the ground with short javelins, swords, and lances. But the leaping monkeys on the ground were enraged and, leaping up, hurled down the *rākṣasas* stationed on the ramparts. That tumultuous conflict of the *rākṣasas* and monkeys, in which the ground grew thick with flesh and blood, was something unimaginable.

Sarga 33

[1–4] As those great monkeys continued to fight, a terrible rage against their army arose among the *rākṣasas*. Those tigers among *rākṣasas* sallied forth, causing the ten directions to resound. They were *rākṣasas* of dreadful deeds, eager for Rāvaṇa's victory. They had golden-plumed horses, battle standards that resembled flames of fire, chariots resplendent as the sun, and exquisite armor. And the vast host of monkeys, who also desired victory,

hurled itself upon the army of the *rākṣasas*, who could take on any form at will.

[5–9] At this juncture, as they hurled themselves at one another, the monkeys and the *rākṣasas* engaged in single combat. The *rākṣasa* Indrajit fought with Aṅgada, Vālin's son, just as long ago the immensely powerful *asura* Andhaka fought with three-eyed Śiva. Saṃpāti, ever irresistible in battle, fought with Prajaṅgha, while the monkey Hanumān engaged Jambumālin. In a towering rage, Rāvaṇa's younger brother, the *rākṣasa* Vibhīṣaṇa, closed in combat with Mitraghna, of blazing speed. Mighty Gaja fought with the *rākṣasa* Tapana, and powerful Nīla with Nikumbha.

[10–15] The lord of the monkeys, Sugrīva, engaged with Praghasa, while majestic Lakṣmaṇa closed in battle with Virūpākṣa. Rāma engaged with the irresistible Agniketu, the *rākṣasa* Raśmiketu, Suptaghna, and Yajñakopa. Two of the leading monkeys engaged with a pair of particularly dreadful *rākṣasas*: Mainda with Vajramuṣṭi and Dvivida with Aśaniprabha. The heroic and dreadful *rākṣasa* Pratapana, irresistible in battle, engaged in combat with Nala, of blazing speed. The son of Dharma, the great and powerful monkey known as Suṣeṇa, fought with Vidyunmālin. And many other fearsome monkeys engaged in single combat in various ways with many other *rākṣasas*.

[16–17] The great battle that took place there between the heroic *rākṣasas* and monkeys, both desirous of victory, was tumultuous and hair-raising. From the bodies of the tawny monkeys and *rākṣasas* flowed gushing rivers of blood, with hair in place of weeds and carrying logjams of corpses.

[18–22] In a rage, Indrajit struck the heroic Aṅgada, breaker of enemy ranks, with his mace, just as Indra of the hundred sacrifices might with his *vajra*. And in that combat, the swift monkey, majestic Aṅgada, smashed Indrajit's gilded chariot together with its horses and charioteer. Prajaṅgha shot Saṃpāti with three arrows; but he, in turn, struck Prajaṅgha with an *aśvakarṇa* tree in the vanguard of battle. In that battle, immensely powerful Jambumālin, furious, mounted his chariot and, with a javelin he kept there, struck Hanumān in the middle of the chest. But Hanumān, the son of Māruta, leapt upon Jambumālin's chariot and, with a blow of his hand, swiftly destroyed it together with that *rākṣasa*.

[23–27] Then Gaja, his body pierced by the sharp arrows of the dexterous *rākṣasa* Tapana, smashed him with a mountain peak held in his fist. Sugrīva, overlord of the monkeys, then killed Praghasa, who seemed almost to be devouring the troops, smashing him to pieces with a *saptaparṇa* tree. After tormenting the fearsome-looking *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa with a hail of arrows, Lakṣmaṇa killed him with a single shaft. The irresistible Agniketu, the *rākṣasa* Raśmiketu, Suptaghna, and Yajñakopa all pierced Rāma with their arrows. But with four fearsome arrows resembling tongues of flame, Rāma, enraged, lopped off the heads of all four of them in battle.

[28–31] In combat Mainda smashed Vajramuṣṭi with his fist so that, along with his chariot and horses, he crashed down to the earth, like the lofty tower of a citadel. Then Dvivida, whose blows were like that of Indra's *vajra* or thunderbolt, struck Aśaniprabha with a mountain peak right before the eyes of all the *rākṣasas*. But in the battle, with arrows that resembled thunderbolts, Aśaniprabha, in turn, riddled the monkey lord Dvivida, who used trees as weapons. And, in turn, with a *sāla* tree, Dvivida, his body bristling with arrows and beside himself with rage, crushed Aśaniprabha, along with his horses and chariot.

[32–34] Then, in battle, Nikumbha pierced Nīla, whose dark luster was like that of a mass of collyrium, with sharp arrows, just as the many-rayed sun pierces a dark cloud with its beams. Next, that dexterous night-roaming *rākṣasa* Nikumbha once again riddled Nīla in combat with a hundred arrows and laughed. But Nīla, like Viṣṇu in battle, cut off the heads of Nikumbha and his charioteer in combat with a discus taken from their chariot.

[35–41] Mounted in his chariot, Vidyunmālin struck Suṣeṇa with gold-inlaid arrows and roared repeatedly. Then, seeing him mounted in his chariot, that foremost among monkeys Suṣeṇa quickly smashed the chariot with a huge mountain peak. But the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Vidyunmālin, who was endowed with great speed, swiftly leapt from his chariot and, mace in hand, made a stand on the ground. Then, suffused with rage, Suṣeṇa, that bull among the tawny monkeys, seized an enormous boulder and charged at the night-roaming *rākṣasa*. With his mace, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Vidyunmālin swiftly struck Suṣeṇa, foremost of tawny monkeys, who was rushing toward him, in the chest. But that best of

leaping monkeys paid no heed to that terrible blow of the mace, and in that great battle, he hurled the boulder down upon Vidyunmālin's chest. Struck by the blow of that boulder, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Vidyunmālin fell lifeless to the earth, his chest crushed.

[42–46] In this fashion, the valorous monkeys slaughtered the valorous night-roaming *rākṣasas* in single combat, just as the gods, dwellers in heaven, slaughtered the *daityas*. With its crescent-headed arrows, swords, maces, javelins, iron cudgels, spears, broken chariots, butchered warhorses, slaughtered rutting elephants, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*, and shattered wheels, axles, and yokes lying on the ground, the battlefield, haunted by packs of jackals, was a place of horror. And in that tumultuous conflict, which was comparable to the battle of the gods and the *asuras*, headless corpses of monkeys and *rākṣasas* leapt about in every direction. As they were being torn to pieces by the bulls among the tawny monkeys, the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, their limbs smeared with blood, swiftly hurled themselves into battle once again, anxious now for the sun, maker of day, to set.

Sarga 34

[1–4] As the monkeys and *rākṣasas* continued to fight, the sun set and a deadly night came on. Then ensued a clash by night between those terrifying monkeys and *rākṣasas*, locked in their mutual hostility, all of them eager for victory. In that terrible darkness they slaughtered one another in battle: the tawny monkeys crying, "Are you a *rākṣasa*?" and the *rākṣasas* crying, "Are you a monkey?" "Kill!" "Rend" "Come on!" "What, running away?" Such were the tumultuous cries that were heard in that darkness.

[5–9] With their golden armor, in the darkness, the swarthy *rākṣasas* looked like great mountains with thickets of luminescent herbs. Beside themselves with fury, the swift *rākṣasas* raced about in that impenetrable darkness, devouring the leaping monkeys. But the monkeys hurled themselves upon the *rākṣasas*' golden-plumed horses and their battle standards that resembled flames of fire and, in a terrifying rage, tore them to pieces with their sharp fangs. Beside themselves with fury, they dragged about elephants with their riders and chariots bedecked with pennants and banners, slashing at them with their fangs. Meanwhile, with arrows that

resembled venomous serpents, Lakṣmaṇa and Rāma cut down the foremost among the *rākṣasas*, whom they could make out but dimly in the darkness.

[10–15] The thick dust raised by the horses' hooves and chariot wheels blocked up the eyes and ears of the warriors. And there, as that terrible, hair-raising battle proceeded in this fashion, swift rivers with blood for water began to flow. And there arose an astonishing sound of battle drums —*bherīs*, *mṛdaṅgas*, and *paṇavas*—mingled with sounds of conch and flute. A very horrifying clamor arose from the clash of arms and from the *rākṣasas* and monkeys, screaming as they were struck down. Strewn with weapons, as if with floral offerings, and thick with mud that oozed blood, the battleground was impassable, transformed beyond all recognition. Like Kālarātri, the dark night of universal destruction, which no living thing can escape, that dreadful night was devastating to both the *rākṣasas* and the tawny monkeys.

[16–22] Then, in that terrible darkness, the frenzied *rākṣasas* attacked Rāma with hails of arrows. And the uproar that they made as they rushed upon him, roaring in fury, was like the sound of the upheaval of the seven seas at the time of universal destruction. But in the blink of an eye, with six sharp arrows, like flames of fire, Rāma struck six of those night-roaming *rākṣasas*: unassailable Yajñaśatru, Mahāpārśva, Mahodara, the giant Vajradaṃṣṭra, and both Śuka and Sāraṇa. Pierced in every vital point by Rāma with his hail of arrows, they crawled away from the battle, barely clinging to life. Then mighty Rāma illuminated all directions with his arrows, which, with their shafts adorned with gold, resembled flames of fire. As for the remaining *rākṣasa* heroes who stood their ground before Rāma, they too were destroyed, like moths entering a flame.

[23–26] With thousands of arrows flying, their feathers fletched with gold, the night was as lovely as an autumnal evening sparkling with fireflies. The bellowing of the *rākṣasas* and the roaring of the tawny monkeys made that dreadful night more dreadful still. As that deafening sound increased on every side, Mount Trikūṭa, with its many echoing caverns, seemed almost to shout in reply. Huge langurs, as black as the darkness itself, crushed night-roaming *rākṣasas* in their arms, rending them with their fangs.

[27–30] At this point, Aṅgada threw himself into the battle in order to destroy his enemy. He swiftly slew the charioteer and horses of Indrajit

Rāvaṇi. His horses and charioteer slain by Aṅgada, Indrajit, who possessed great powers of illusion, vanished on the spot. The evil Indrajit Rāvaṇi, a hero ruthless in battle, possessed a boon from Brahmā. Seething with rage, he concealed himself; and, unseen, he loosed sharp arrows, blazing like lightning bolts. In a rage, the *rākṣasa* pierced Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in every part of their bodies with dreadful arrows in the form of great serpents.

Sarga 35

[1–4] Eager to find out where Indrajit had gone, the valorous and exceedingly mighty Prince Rāma ordered ten leaders of the monkey troops to search for him. That scorcher of his foes gave his command to the two sons of Suṣeṇa, that bull among leaping monkeys Nīla, Aṅgada, son of Vālin, swift Śarabha, Vinata, Jāmbavān, mighty Sānuprastha, Ṛṣabha, and Ṛṣabhaskandha. In great excitement, those tawny monkeys ripped up fearsome trees as they all flung themselves into the sky, searching the ten directions.

[5–9] But Indrajit Rāvaṇi, expert in divine weapon-spells, used the greatest of such weapon-spells to halt the swift movement of those swift monkeys with arrows that were swifter still. Pierced and mutilated by his iron arrows, those tawny monkeys of terrifying speed could not discern him, obscured as he was by darkness, as is the sun by clouds. Indrajit Rāvaṇi, victorious in battle, completely overwhelmed Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with arrows that pierced every vital point. In his fury Indrajit riddled the heroic brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, with great serpents that had turned into arrows. Their bodies were thus thickly covered with arrows that had not a hair's breadth between them. From their wounds, the pathways of blood, the blood flowed copiously so that they both resembled *kiṃśuka* trees covered with their bright red blossoms.

[10–15] Then, as hard to discern as a scattered mass of collyrium, Indrajit Rāvaṇi, his eyes rimmed with red, addressed the two brothers in these words: "Not even Śakra himself, the lord of the thirty gods, can see me or attack me when I fight unseen. How much less could the two of you? Rāghavas! In my towering rage, I shall send you both—tightly bound in my web of heron-fletched arrows—to the abode of Yama." When he had spoken in this fashion to the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who understood righteousness, he pierced them with sharp arrows, as he exulted and roared.

As obscure as a scattered mass of collyrium, he drew his great bow and again and again let fly terrifying arrows in that great conflict. Roaring repeatedly, that hero, who knew the vital points, sank sharp arrows into the vitals of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.

[16–21] In the blink of an eye, the two of them were so tightly bound in the bonds of those arrows there in the forefront of the battle that they could not even see. Then, pierced with arrows and darts and wounded in every limb, the two of them trembled, like two of great Indra's flagstaffs cut loose from their sustaining cords. Weakened by the piercing of their vitals, those two great archers, heroic lords of the earth, staggered and fell to the earth. Their every limb constricted by arrows, suffering and in great agony, the two heroes lay upon the battlefield, a hero's bed, spattered with blood. [g]There was not a finger's breadth between the wounds that covered their bodies. There was no part of their bodies down to their very fingertips that had not been wounded and immobilized by straight-flying arrows. Struck down by that fierce *rākṣasa*, who could take on any form at will, they both poured forth their blood copiously, as two fountains might their water.

[22–26] Rāma fell first, pierced to the vitals with arrows by the raging Indrajit, who had once defeated Śakra. Indrajit had riddled him with iron arrows, half-iron arrows, crescent-headed arrows, and arrows with heads like folded palms, calves' teeth, lions' fangs, and razors. Rāma lay there on the battlefield, a hero's bed, clutching his gilded, thrice-curved bow, now unstrung, its grip shattered. Seeing Rāma, that bull among men, fallen there in the midst of that hail of arrows, Lakṣmaṇa despaired of his own life. And the monkeys, headed by Hanumān, the son of Vāyu, gathered and stood surrounding the two fallen heroes, who lay in bondage. In their affliction, they too became deeply despondent.

Sarga 36

[1–7] Then the forest-dwelling monkeys, glancing nervously at the earth and the sky, gazed upon the two brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who were riddled with arrows. When the *rākṣasa* had accomplished his task and ceased his onslaught, like the god Indra after pouring down the rains, Vibhīṣaṇa arrived at that spot together with Sugrīva. Nīla, Dvivida, Mainda, Suṣeṇa, Sumukha, and Aṅgada, together with Hanumān, began at once to mourn the two Rāghavas. As the monkeys, along with Vibhīṣaṇa, gazed

upon the two fallen Rāghavas, ensnared in a web of arrows, they were all shaken to their depths. For both heroes were motionless, barely breathing, and drenched in gouts of blood. Lying on beds of arrows, they were immobilized, tightly bound with webs of arrows. Their labored breathing was like the hissing of snakes; they barely moved for their strength had all but left them. Their bodies drenched in streams of blood, they resembled flagstaffs of burnished gold. Surrounded by the troop leaders, whose eyes were filled with tears, the two heroes lay there on the battlefield, a hero's bed, barely moving.

[8–10] Although the monkeys scanned the sky and all directions, they could not see Indrajit Rāvaṇi, who had concealed himself in the battle with his powers of illusion. But Vibhīṣaṇa, in looking about, was able, through his own supernatural powers, to discern his brother's son, who stood there, concealed by his powers of illusion. Vibhīṣaṇa was thus able to see that hero, unequaled in his feats and unrivaled in battle, who had concealed himself through the gift of a boon.

[11–16] But Indrajit, as he observed his handiwork and the two heroes lying there, was supremely pleased with himself, and he spoke as follows to the delight of all the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos: "The two mighty brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, slayers of Khara and Dūṣaṇa, have been struck down by my arrows. Not even all the gods and *asuras* together, along with the hosts of seers, can free these two from the bonds of my arrows. I have put an end to the menace they posed, which could have destroyed us all. It is because of them that the three watches of the night now pass without my father—consumed as he was by anxiety—so much as touching his bed. And it is because of them that the whole city of Laṅkā has become as turbulent as a river in the rainy season. All the valorous deeds of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and all the forest-dwelling monkeys have proven to be as fruitless as rain clouds in autumn."

[17–19] When he had spoken in this fashion to all the *rākṣasas* who stood beside him, Rāvaṇi began once more to assail all the leaders of the monkey troops. Once he had afflicted them with torrents of arrows and terrified the monkeys, the great-armed hero laughed and said this: "Look, *rākṣasas*, at those two brothers, whom I have bound with the terrible bonds of my arrows right in front of their troops!"

[20–23] Addressed in this fashion, the *rākṣasas*, treacherous fighters all, were greatly amazed and gratified by that feat. Thinking, "Rāma has been slain!" those *rākṣasas*, who resembled storm clouds, uttered a great roar and honored Rāvaṇi. Seeing both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa motionless on the ground and scarcely breathing, he assumed that they had been killed. Filled with delight, Indrajit, victorious in battle, entered the citadel of Laṅkā to the delight of all the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos.

[24–28] When Sugrīva saw that the bodies of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were riddled with arrows in each and every limb, terror seized him. Then Vibhīṣaṇa addressed the monkey king, who was terrified and dejected, his face covered with tears and his eyes suffused with sorrow: "Enough of this faintheartedness, Sugrīva! Hold back this flood of tears! Battles are often like this. Victory is far from certain. If there is any remnant of good fortune left to us, hero, the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa will regain consciousness. So pull yourself together, monkey, and thus encourage me, who am without any recourse. Those who are devoted to the true path of righteousness have no fear of death."

[29–38] When he had spoken in this fashion, Vibhīṣaṇa dipped his hand in water and, with it, wiped Sugrīva's lovely eyes. Once he had wiped the wise monkey king's face, he calmly spoke these timely words: "This is not the time to give way to despair, greatest of monkey kings. Moreover, at this inopportune moment, excessive tenderness could prove fatal. Therefore, you must abandon despair, which undermines all endeavors. You must think about what would be best for these troops under Rāma's leadership. Rather, you should stand guard over Rāma until he regains consciousness. Once the two Kākutsthas have regained consciousness, they will dispel our fear. This is nothing to Rāma; nor is he about to die. For that vital glow, which is never found in the dead, is not deserting him. So you must console yourself and rally your forces while I regroup all the troops. For, bull among tawny monkeys, these tawny monkeys, filled with alarm, their eyes wide with terror, are spreading rumors from ear to ear. But once the tawny monkeys see me rushing about to encourage the army, they will cast aside their fear, as one would a used garland." Once that foremost of *rākṣasas* Vibhīṣaṇa had reassured Sugrīva, he set about rallying the terrified monkey army.

[39–43] But as for Indrajit, that great master of illusion, he entered the city of Laṅkā, surrounded by all his troops, and presented himself before his

father. Hands cupped in reverence, he respectfully greeted his father, Rāvaṇa, who was seated there, and told him the good news that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa had been slain. When Rāvaṇa heard that his two enemies had been felled, he leapt up in great delight and embraced his son, right in the midst of the *rākṣasas*. Delighted at heart, he kissed him on the head before questioning him. Indrajit then reported everything, just as it had happened, to his father, who was questioning him. His heart flooded with a great access of joy upon hearing the words of that great chariot-warrior, he cast aside the anxiety that Dāśarathi had caused and, in great delight, praised his son.

Sarga 37

[1–4] Once Indrajit, the son of Rāvaṇa, had returned to Laṅkā, his mission accomplished, the bulls among monkeys, in great distress, surrounded Rāghava to protect him. Then those monkeys—Hanumān, Aṅgada, Nīla, Suṣeṇa, Kumuda, Nala, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Jāmbavān, Ṛṣabha, Sunda, Rambha, Śatabali, and Pṛthu—put their troops in battle formation and, maintaining a watch on all sides, armed themselves with trees. Scanning all directions, above as well as on every side, they thought at the mere stirring of the grass that the *rākṣasas* had come.

[5–10] Meanwhile, in great delight, Rāvaṇa, having dismissed his son Indrajit, summoned the *rākṣasa* women who were guarding Sītā. Those *rākṣasa* women, together with Trijaṭā, attended upon him at his command. Then, in great delight, the lord of the *rākṣasas* addressed those *rākṣasa* women: "You are to tell Vaidehī that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa have been slain by Indrajit. Then take her in the flying palace Puṣpaka and show her the two of them, slain on the battlefield. That husband of hers, relying on whom she stubbornly spurned me, has been destroyed, along with his brother, in the vanguard of battle. Now Sītā Maithilī, free from anxiety, longing, and hope, and adorned with all manner of jewelry, will surely come to me. [h]Seeing that Rāma, along with Lakṣmaṇa, has succumbed to the power of Kāla in battle and finding no alternative, she will have her hopes finally dashed this very day."

[11–13] Upon hearing those words of evil-minded Rāvaṇa, the *rākṣasa* women said, "So be it," and went off to where the flying palace Puṣpaka was. Then, in compliance with Rāvaṇa's command, the *rākṣasa* women

took the flying palace Puṣpaka and fetched Maithilī, who was in the *aśoka* grove. The *rākṣasa* women seized Sītā, who was lost in sorrow for her husband, and forced her into the flying palace Puṣpaka.

[14–15] Once Rāvaṇa had seen to it that Sītā had been taken aboard the flying palace Puṣpaka along with Trijaṭā, he had Laṅkā festooned with pennants and banners. And in great delight, the lord of the *rākṣasas* had the following proclamation made throughout Laṅkā: "Indrajit has slain Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa in battle!"

[16–21] Meanwhile, Sītā, traveling with Trijaṭā in the flying palace, saw that practically the entire monkey army had been annihilated. And she saw that the flesh-eating *rākṣasas* were delighted at heart, while the monkeys standing beside Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were afflicted with sorrow. Then Sītā spied both Lakṣmaṇa and Rāma lying unconscious on their beds of arrows, riddled with arrows. Their armor was shattered and their bows had slipped from their grasp. Their every limb riddled with arrows, the two heroes looked like two pillars of arrows fallen to the ground. When Sītā saw the two heroic brothers, those bulls among men, she was overwhelmed with terrible grief, and she lamented piteously. Seeing those two brothers, who were equal in power to the gods, Sītā, overwhelmed with tears and sorrow, assumed that they were dead. Stricken with grief, she uttered these words.

Sarga 38

[1–5] When Sītā, drawn with grief, saw that her husband as well as mighty Lakṣmaṇa had been struck down, she lamented piteously and profusely: [i]Those scholars who know the science of bodily signs said that I would bear sons and never be a widow. Now that Rāma has been slain, [j]it is clear that all those wise men spoke falsely. And they said that I would be the chief queen of a king who performed the rites of royalty, the wife of a great patron of sacrifices. Now that Rāma has been slain, [k]it is clear that all those wise men spoke falsely. And although they told me, 'You shall be the wife of a heroic king and very fortunate,' now that Rāma has been slain, [l]it is clear that all those wise men spoke falsely. And as for those twice-born brahmans, the astrologers who foretold in my presence that I should enjoy good fortune, now that Rāma has been slain, [m]it is clear that all those wise men spoke falsely.

[6–8] “And here, on my feet, are those lotus marks, whereby it is said women come to be consecrated for sovereignty together with their royal husbands. Nor, though I search for them, do I find on my body those inauspicious signs whereby unfortunate women become widows. Indeed, the signs on my body are meaningless. In the science of bodily signs, the lotus marks of women are said to be infallible. But now that Rāma has been slain, they have proven false for me.

[9–13] “My hair is fine, even, and dark. My eyebrows do not meet. My legs are smooth and tapering, and my teeth are closely set. And my temples, eyes, hands, feet, ankles, and thighs are nicely developed. My nails are rounded and glossy. My fingers and toes are well proportioned. My breasts, their nipples sunken, are full and closely set. My navel is deep with sloping sides. My chest and sides are nicely developed. My complexion has the radiance of a jewel. My body hair is fine. Since I stand so firmly on my feet—all twelve points making contact—they said that I was possessed of auspicious signs. My hands and feet are of excellent color, without gaps, and marked with the auspicious sign of a whole barleycorn. Those who know the science of the bodily signs of girls said of me, ‘She has that faint smile.’

[14–19] “The brahman astrologers foretold that I should be consecrated for sovereignty together with my husband. Now that has all proven false. After scouring Janasthāna and finding out what had become of me, the two brothers crossed the imperturbable ocean only to be slain in a petty skirmish. Didn’t the two Rāghavas obtain the divine weapon-spells of Varuṇa, Agni, Indra, and Vāyu, as well as the divine Brahmaśiras weapon-spell? My two protectors, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who are comparable to Vāsava himself, have been slain in battle by an invisible foe through the power of illusion. Now there is no one to protect me. For in battle no enemy whom Rāghava could see would have escaped with his life, even were he as swift as thought itself. Since Rāma and his brother lie slain in battle, I see that nothing is beyond the power of Kāla and that it is impossible to avert one’s fate.

[20–21] “I do not grieve for my slain husband and Lakṣmaṇa, nor for myself and my mother, as much as for my poor mother-in-law. For she must be constantly thinking, ‘Oh, when will I see Rāma, his vow completed, return together with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa?’ ”

[22–28] But as Sītā was lamenting in this fashion, the *rākṣasa* woman Trijaṭā said to her: "Do not despair, my lady, for your husband still lives. And I shall give you powerful and convincing reasons, my lady, why the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa must be alive. For if their leader had been slain in battle, his troops' faces would not be so suffused with anger and animated with excitement. Moreover, Vaidehī, if those two heroes had really lost their lives, this celestial flying palace, which goes by the name of Puṣpaka, would not be carrying you. Then, too, when its heroic leader is slain, an army, dispirited and irresolute, drifts aimlessly across the battlefield, like a rudderless vessel on the water. But this army is neither confused nor despondent. On the contrary, it is moving swiftly to protect the two Kākutsthas, who have been defeated in battle by the power of illusion. You should be reassured by these signs, which presage happiness. You must realize that the Kākutsthas have not been slain. I tell you this out of affection.

[29–33] "I have never uttered a falsehood, nor will I ever. Through your virtuous conduct and pleasant demeanor, you have found a place in my heart. These two could never be defeated in battle even by the gods and *asuras* together with Indra. I have told you this on the basis of my observation of their faces. And observe carefully, Maithilī, the most important sign of all: although they are both unconscious, their vital glow has not left them. For, invariably, when men have lost their vital spark and breath of life, a terrible change is apparent in their faces. So, daughter of Janaka, you must give up your grief, pain, and delusion on account of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. For it is not possible that they could have been killed this day."

[34–37] When Sītā Maithilī, who was like a daughter of the gods, had heard these words of Trijaṭā, she cupped her hands in reverence and said this: "May it be so." Trijaṭā then turned around the flying palace Puṣpaka, swift as thought, and took the despondent Sītā back to Laṅkā. When Sītā, together with Trijaṭā, had descended from the flying palace Puṣpaka, the *rākṣasa* women took her straight back to the *aśoka* grove. Sītā entered the *rākṣasa* lord's pleasure ground with its many groves of trees. And there, brooding about the king's sons whom she had just seen, she sank into the most profound despair.

Sarga 39

[1–3] Meanwhile, overcome with grief, all the mighty monkey leaders, including Sugrīva, stood surrounding the two great sons of Daśaratha. As the two of them lay there drenched in blood, bound with the terrible bonds of arrows, their labored breathing was like the hissing of great serpents. At that moment, because he was so hardy and through the exertion of his strength, powerful Rāma regained consciousness, though he remained bound by the arrows.

[4–7] But then, when he saw that his brother was stricken—deeply wounded, covered with blood, his face deathly—he began to lament in his desolation: “What do I care for Sītā or even for my life itself now that I see my brother lying defeated in battle? Were I to search the world, I could find another woman like Sītā, but never a brother, a companion, or a warrior to equal Lakṣmaṇa. If Lakṣmaṇa, the increaser of Sumitrā’s joy, has indeed returned to the elements, then I shall abandon my life right before the eyes of the monkeys.

[8–11] “Whatever shall I tell Kausalyā, and what shall I tell mother Kaikeyī? And how shall I tell mother Sumitrā, longing for the sight of her son? And how shall I console Sumitrā, trembling and shrieking like an osprey at the loss of her darling son, if I should return without him? And how shall I tell Śatrughna and the illustrious Bharata, if I were to go back again without him with whom I went to the forest? Alas! I shall not be able to endure the reproaches of Sumitrā. I shall abandon my body right here, for I cannot bear to go on living.

[12–17] “Damn me, an ignoble evildoer, on whose account Lakṣmaṇa lies fallen on a bed of arrows, his life breaths ebbing. You always used to comfort me, Lakṣmaṇa, when I was downcast. But now, your life breaths ebbing, you can no longer even speak to me in my pain. That hero, who struck down so many *rākṣasas* in combat on the field of battle, now lies on the very same field, struck down by his foes. Lying on this bed of arrows, covered with his own blood, and bound in a web of arrows, he looks like the sun, bringer of light, as it sets. His vitals pierced with arrows, he can no longer see. And although he cannot speak, the expression of his eyes betrays his torment. Just as that glorious hero followed me as I went to the forest, so will I now follow him to the abode of Yama.

[18–21] “He always cherished his family, and he was ever devoted to me. But now through my failed tactics—ignoble as I am—he has been reduced to this state. I cannot recall heroic Lakṣmaṇa ever uttering a harsh or unpleasant word, even when he was enraged. Lakṣmaṇa, who could loose five hundred arrows in one swift motion, thus surpassed even Kārtavīrya himself in archery. He who, with his divine weapon-spells, could destroy the divine weapon-spells of even great Śakra and who deserves the most costly bed now lies stricken on the bare earth.

[22–29] “In that I have failed to make Vibhīṣaṇa the king of the *rākṣasas*, there is no doubt that what has proven to be my idle boast will torment me. And you, King Sugrīva, should return home this very instant, for once mighty Rāvaṇa realizes that you no longer have me to assist you, he will attack. Placing Añgada in the lead, you, together with your troops and allies, must once again cross the ocean by that very same bridge. Hanumān accomplished feats in battle impossible for others to accomplish. I am also well pleased with the king of the apes and the overlord of the langurs. Añgada accomplished great deeds, as did Mainda and Dvivida, while Kesarin and Saṃpāti fought fearsome battles in the war. Gavaya, Gavākṣa, Śarabha, Gaja, and the other tawny monkeys fought on my behalf, heedless of their lives. Truly, Sugrīva, it is impossible for men to evade their fate. Nonetheless, Sugrīva, scorcher of your foes, in your anxiety lest you transgress righteousness, you did everything that was possible for a friend or ally to do. Bulls among monkeys! You have discharged the obligations of friendship. I therefore give you all leave. You may depart as you please.”

[30–32] As those tawny-eyed monkeys listened to Rāma’s lament, they began to weep. Meanwhile, Vibhīṣaṇa, having prevented all the troops from fleeing, rushed back, mace in hand, to where Rāghava lay. But when the monkeys saw him rushing toward them, like a mass of black collyrium, they all fled, thinking that he was Indrajit Rāvaṇi.

Sarga 40

[1–6] Then the mighty and powerful king of the tawny monkeys asked: “Why is the army fleeing wildly, like a ship driven to and fro by contrary winds at sea?” Hearing Sugrīva’s words, Vālin’s son, Añgada, replied: “Can’t you see that the two great heroes, the sons of Daśaratha—Rāma and

mighty Lakṣmaṇa—are lying on beds of arrows, drenched with blood and tightly bound with webs of arrows?" Then Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys, responded to his son, Añgada: "I do not doubt that that is one reason. Still, there must be some other cause for their alarm. For the tawny monkeys, their faces downcast, have dropped their weapons and are fleeing in all directions, their eyes wide with terror. They have no sense of shame before one another; nor do they look back. They drag one another out of their way and leap over the fallen."

[7–12] At that very moment, the hero Vibhīṣaṇa, mace in hand, hailed Sugrīva and then stared at Rāghava. Perceiving that it was Vibhīṣaṇa who was the cause of the monkeys' terror, Sugrīva said to Jāmbavān, the king of the apes, who was close at hand: "It is Vibhīṣaṇa who has come. Upon seeing him, these bulls among monkeys are fleeing in terror, fearing that it was Rāvaṇa's son. You must stop them, for, in their terror, they are running off in all directions as fast as they can. Tell them that it is only Vibhīṣaṇa who has come." Addressed in this fashion by Sugrīva, Jāmbavān, the king of the apes, turned back the monkeys from their flight and reassured them. When the monkeys heard the words of the king of the apes and saw that it was indeed Vibhīṣaṇa, they all abandoned their fear and returned.

[13–19] But as for righteous Vibhīṣaṇa, when he saw the bodies of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa riddled with arrows, he became deeply distraught. Wiping their eyes with a hand moistened with water, he wept and lamented, his heart overwhelmed with sorrow. "These two powerful and brave warriors, delighting in battle, have been reduced to this condition by those treacherous warriors, the *rākṣasas*. With his crooked *rākṣasa* mind, my brother's evil and unworthy son has tricked these two whose valor was untainted by guile. Drenched with blood, they lie sleeping on the ground. Completely riddled with arrows, they look like two hedgehogs. These bulls among men, upon whose might I had pinned my hopes for royal consecration, now both lie sleeping on the point of death. Though still living, I am now as good as dead, my hopes of kingship dashed. Meanwhile, my enemy, Rāvaṇa, has accomplished his vow and has had his wish fulfilled."

[20–22] As Vibhīṣaṇa was lamenting in this fashion, powerful Sugrīva, king of the tawny monkeys, embraced him and said this: "Knower of righteousness, you shall obtain kingship over Lañkā. Of this there can be no

doubt. Rāvaṇa and his son will not retain the kingship here. Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa are both merely pinioned by arrows. Once they shake off their stupor, they will surely kill Rāvaṇa and all his troops in battle."

[23–25] When he had consoled and reassured the *rākṣasa* in this fashion, he spoke to his father-in-law, Suṣeṇa, who stood at his side: "Take the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, tamers of their foes, once they have regained consciousness, and, together with the heroic hosts of tawny monkeys, go back to Kiṣkindhā. But as for me, I shall slay Rāvaṇa along with his son and his kinsmen and bring back Maithilī, just as Śakra did Śrī when she was lost."

[26–32] When Suṣeṇa had heard this speech of the lord of the monkeys, he spoke these words: "I have heard about a great and terrible battle between the gods and the *asuras*. At that time, the *dānavas*, who were expert in the use of arrows, concealed themselves and thus repeatedly struck down the gods although they too were skilled in weaponry. Then, although they were afflicted, unconscious, or dead, Bṛhaspati restored them with healing herbs and spells replete with *mantras*. Therefore, let Saṃpāti, Panasa, and the other monkeys go with all possible speed to the ocean of milk to bring back those healing herbs. Those tawny monkeys will recognize the two powerful healing herbs that grow on the mountains there, the divine *saṃjīvakaraṇī*, 'restorer of life,' and the *viśalyā*, 'healer of arrow wounds,' which was created by the gods. In that great ocean, there are two mountains called Candra and Droṇa. There, where the nectar of immortality was churned forth, is where those two supreme herbs of healing are to be found. Those two supreme herbs of healing were planted on the mountains there by the gods. So, king, let Hanumān, son of Vāyu, go there."

[33–37] Just at that moment there arose a wind hurling up the water in the ocean, driving away the lightning-streaked clouds and seeming almost to shake the very mountains. That powerful wind, driven by a pair of wings, snapped the branches of all the island's great trees and sent them flying, roots and all, into the salt sea. The hooded serpents who dwelt there were terrified and the great sea serpents swiftly plunged deep into the salt sea. Then, a moment later, all the monkeys spied immensely powerful Garuḍa Vainateya as radiant as fire, the purifier. And when those great serpents, who had assumed the form of arrows and who had bound fast those two

virtuous and immensely powerful men, saw him coming, they fled in all directions.

[38–40] Then Suparṇa, spying the Kākutsthas, greeted them and stroked their faces, as lustrous as the moon, with both his hands. No sooner had Vainateya touched them than their wounds healed over and their bodies immediately became smooth and lustrous once more. And their cardinal virtues—courage, prowess, strength, vigor, and fortitude, as well as their insight, intelligence, and memory—returned to them with redoubled force.

[41–44] Helping the two delighted heroes, equals of Vāsava, to their feet, Garuḍa embraced them. Rāma then said this: "Through your grace, sir, we have overcome the great calamity wrought here by Rāvaṇi and have been swiftly restored to our full strength. On meeting you, my heart is as soothed as if I had met my father, Daśaratha, or my grandfather, Aja. You are endowed with beauty and adorned with heavenly garlands and unguents. You wear spotless garments and are adorned with heavenly ornaments. Who are you, sir?"

[45–49] Then mighty and powerful Vainateya, king of the birds, delighted at heart, his eyes lighting up with joy, said to him: "I am Garutmān, Kākutstha, your dear comrade, your second life breath outside your body. I have come here to the aid of you both. Neither the powerful *asuras* nor the mighty *dānavas*, not even the gods and *gandharvas* with Indra of the hundred sacrifices at their head, would have been able to loose this terrible bondage of arrows effected by cruel Indrajit through the power of illusion. Through the *rākṣasa*'s power of illusion, those great serpents, the sons of Kadrū, sharp fanged and fiercely venomous, had become arrows and fastened themselves upon you.

[50–54] "Along with your brother Lakṣmaṇa, a slayer of enemies in battle, you have been fortunate, righteous Rāma, true in your valor. For as soon as I heard what had happened, I came at once, in great haste, out of my affection for you both and to honor my friendship. Now that you have been freed from the very dreadful bondage of those arrows, you must both be constantly on your guard. By their very nature all *rākṣasas* are treacherous fighters in battle. On the other hand, the strength of pure-hearted heroes, such as yourselves, lies in the fact that they are honorable. Therefore, you two should not trust *rākṣasas* on the battlefield. This very example serves to show that *rākṣasas* are always treacherous."

[55–59] When mighty Suparṇa had addressed Rāma in this fashion, he embraced him with the affection befitting a friend and began to take his leave. “Rāghava, my righteous friend, compassionate even to your enemies, I should like to take leave of you, for I shall now depart just as I came. Once you have slaughtered the male population of Laṅkā with your waves of arrows, sparing only the children and the aged, and have slain your enemy Rāvaṇa, you shall surely recover Sītā.” When mighty Suparṇa, swift in flight, had spoken these words in this fashion and had healed Rāma of his wounds there in the midst of the forest-dwelling monkeys, he reverently circled and embraced him. Then, hurling himself into the sky like Pavana, Suparṇa departed.

[60–64] Seeing that the two Rāghavas were healed of their wounds, the leaders of the monkey troops unleashed lionlike roars and lashed their tails. They beat the *bherī* drums and made the *mṛdaṅgas* resound. They blew their conches and frolicked about happily just as before. The valiant monkeys, who used trees as their weapons, clapped their upper arms again and again. Ripping up trees of various kinds, they took their stand there by the hundreds of thousands. Emitting mighty roars and terrifying the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, the leaping monkeys advanced upon the gates of Laṅkā, eager for battle. The terrifying and tumultuous roar that arose from those leaders of the troops of the tree-dwelling monkeys was like the frightful rumbling of the thundering storm clouds in the dead of night at summer’s end.

Sarga 41

[1–5] Then Rāvaṇa and the *rākṣasas* heard the tumultuous sound of the swift monkeys as they roared. Upon hearing that mighty uproar with its deep and joyous resonance, he spoke these words in the midst of his ministers: “From this tremendous uproar, arising from these many excited monkeys, roaring like thunderclouds, it is clear beyond a doubt that they are experiencing tremendous joy. Indeed, the ocean itself, abode of Varuṇa, is agitated by their loud cries. Granted, the two brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, have been bound fast with sharp arrows; nonetheless, this great uproar causes me concern.”

[6–10] Having addressed these words to his counselors, the lord of the *rākṣasas* then spoke to the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, who stood at their posts

all around him. “Find out at once why all these forest-dwelling monkeys are rejoicing at a time when they ought to be grieving.” Addressed by him in this fashion, they climbed the ramparts in great agitation and surveyed the army that was under the protection of great Sugrīva. When those *rākṣasas* saw the two illustrious Rāghavas standing there, freed from the terrible bondage of arrows, their hearts sank. Terrified at heart and with faces downcast, they all descended from the ramparts and presented themselves before the *rākṣasa* lord.

[11–17] Their dismay evident in their faces, the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, skilled in speech, broke the bad news to Rāvaṇa faithfully and accurately, saying: “Indrajit had bound the two brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, with bonds of arrows so that their arms were immobilized. But just now, on the battlefield, we saw those two, powerful as lordly elephants, freed from the bondage of arrows, like two elephants who have broken their chains.” When the mighty lord of the *rākṣasas* had heard those words of theirs, he was overwhelmed with anxiety and grief. With downcast face, he said: “In combat, Indrajit had struck down and bound those two with fearsome and unfailing arrows. Resembling venomous serpents and brilliant as the sun, they were given to him as a boon. If, having once been subject to such bondage by weapons, my two enemies are now free, then I see that my entire army is in peril. Those arrows, as powerful as the great serpent Vāsuki, which used to steal away the lives of my enemies in battle, have now been rendered useless.”

[18–21] Having spoken in this fashion, Rāvaṇa, hissing like a serpent in his rage, addressed a *rākṣasa* called Dhūmrākṣa there in the midst of the *rākṣasas*. “Take a large force of *rākṣasas*, fearsome in their deeds, and go forth to slaughter Rāma together with the monkeys.” Addressed in this fashion by the wise lord of the *rākṣasas*, Dhūmrākṣa made his obeisance and, in great excitement, left the king’s residence. As he passed through the palace gates, he ordered the officer in charge of the garrison, “Mobilize the troops at once! What use is delay to one eager to fight?”

[22–27] When the officer in charge of the garrison, the leader of his troops, had heard Dhūmrākṣa’s words, he quickly mobilized his troops, following the command of Rāvaṇa. Those mighty and terrifying night-roaming *rākṣasas* fastened on their war bells and, roaring loudly in their great excitement, surrounded Dhūmrākṣa. They wielded various weapons.

In their hands they held lances and war hammers. Roaring like thunderclouds, those terrible *rākṣasas* marched forth vigorously armed with maces, spears, staves, iron cudgels, iron clubs, short javelins, crescent-headed arrows, darts, and battle-axes. Unassailable as tigers, those tigers among *rākṣasas* sallied forth. Some wore armor and rode in chariots adorned with battle standards, inlaid with fretworks of gold, and drawn by donkeys with faces of many different kinds. Others rode extremely swift horses and lordly elephants intoxicated with rut.

[28–35] With harsh cries, Dhūmrākṣa then mounted a heavenly chariot yoked to donkeys, which had the faces of wolves and lions and were adorned with gold. Laughing, the mighty Dhūmrākṣa, surrounded by *rākṣasas*, proceeded to the western gate, where the troop leader Hanumān was stationed. But as that very terrible and fearsome-looking *rākṣasa* proceeded, savage birds of ill omen appeared in the sky, blocking his path. A very fearsome vulture alighted on the top of his chariot, while long lines of carrion birds perched on the edge of his battle standard. A huge, headless corpse, ghastly pale and drenched with blood, lay on the earth in Dhūmrākṣa's path, emitting discordant sounds. It rained blood and the earth shook. The wind blew in an unfavorable direction with a thunderous roar. Shrouded in a flood of darkness, the directions were no longer visible. Seeing those very gruesome portents that had appeared, bringing terror to the *rākṣasas*, Dhūmrākṣa himself was shaken. As that mighty and very fearsome *rākṣasa*, eager for battle, marched forth, surrounded by many night-roaming *rākṣasas*, he gazed upon the army under the protection of Rāghava's arms, which, with its many monkeys, resembled an ocean.

Sarga 42

[1–4] When the monkeys saw the *rākṣasa* Dhūmrākṣa marching forth with his fearsome cries, they all roared in their excitement, eager for battle. Then a frenzied battle broke out between the tawny monkeys and the *rākṣasas*, who slaughtered one another—the former with terrifying trees, the latter with lances and war hammers. The *rākṣasas* cut down the fearsome monkeys on all sides, while the monkeys smashed the *rākṣasas* to the ground with trees. And the *rākṣasas*, in their fury, pierced the monkeys with sharp and fearsome-looking arrows, fletched with heron feathers and flying true.

[5–8] Although they were wounded by the *rākṣasas* with fearsome maces, spears, mallets, and war hammers, various and dreadful iron clubs, and sharp tridents, the very powerful monkeys, their fervor aroused by their indignation, fearlessly accomplished great feats. Their limbs pierced with arrows and their bodies pierced with lances, the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys seized trees and boulders. Bellowing and calling out their names, the tawny monkeys, fearsome in their speed, annihilated the fearsome *rākṣasas* on every side.

[9–860*–14] It was an amazing and horrific battle that took place between the monkeys and the *rākṣasas*. With a victorious air, the monkeys annihilated some of the *rākṣasas* with various boulders and trees with many branches. Other *rākṣasas*, accustomed to drinking blood, now spewed it from their mouths. Some had their flanks ripped open, others were beaten to a shapeless mass with trees; still others were pulverized by boulders, while some were rent with fangs. [n]The ground was littered with torn and broken battle standards, slain donkeys, shattered chariots, fallen night-roaming *rākṣasas*, lordly elephants that resembled mountains, and, together with their riders, warhorses that had been crushed with mountain peaks by the forest-dwelling monkeys. The *rākṣasas* had their faces ripped open by the sharp claws of the swift monkeys, who leapt at them again and again, fearsome in their valor. Their faces pale, their hair flying wildly about, the *rākṣasas* fell to the ground again and again, fainting from the smell of blood.

[15–23] But some of the *rākṣasas*, fearsome in their valor, attacked the tawny monkeys with their open hands, which struck like thunderbolts. But as they rushed swiftly onward, they were struck down by the monkeys—who were swifter still—with fists, feet, fangs, and trees. Seeing his forces put to flight, that bull among *rākṣasas*, Dhūmrākṣa, in a rage, began to slaughter those monkeys, who were eager for battle. Some of the monkeys, wounded with darts, gushed blood, while others, smashed by war hammers, fell to the ground. Some were wounded with iron clubs, others were slashed with short javelins. Still others, struck down by spears, staggered and breathed their last. Some of the forest-dwelling monkeys were knocked to the ground, drenched in blood; still others, fleeing the battle, were slaughtered by the furious *rākṣasas*. Some of them lay on one side, their chests ripped open; still others were ripped open by tridents so that their

entrails spilled forth. With its hosts of tawny monkeys and *rākṣasas*, its abundance of weapons, and masses of boulders and trees, that great battle looked truly frightening. With the twanging of bowstrings in place of the sweet sound of the lute, the gasps of the dying for the beating of time, and the faint cries of the wounded in place of singing, the battle resembled a musical recital.

[24–30] And as for Dhūmrākṣa, he stood laughing in the forefront of the battle, bow in hand, as he scattered the monkeys in all directions with showers of arrows. When Māruti saw that the army was being harassed and tormented by Dhūmrākṣa, he seized an enormous boulder and rushed at him in a rage. Equal in might to his father, his eyes now doubly red with rage, he hurled that boulder at Dhūmrākṣa's chariot. When Dhūmrākṣa saw that boulder hurtling toward him, he grabbed his mace in great agitation and, quickly leaping from his chariot, took his stand on the ground. As it fell to the ground, the boulder smashed his chariot along with its wheels, poles, horses, battle standard, and bows. After smashing his chariot, Hanumān, son of Māruta, began to slaughter the *rākṣasas* with trees—trunks, branches, and all. Some of the *rākṣasas*, crushed by trees, their heads smashed, lay on the ground, drenched in blood.

[31–37] When he had put the *rākṣasa* army to flight, Hanumān, son of Māruta, seized a mountain peak and charged straight at Dhūmrākṣa. With a roar, mighty Dhūmrākṣa seized his mace and charged violently toward Hanumān as the latter ran toward him. Then, in a fury, Dhūmrākṣa forcefully brought his mace, with its numerous spikes, down upon Hanumān's skull. Struck with that fearsome-looking mace, the monkey, who had the strength of Māruta, shrugged off that blow and brought the mountain peak down on the middle of Dhūmrākṣa's head. Struck by that mountain peak, his every limb buckling, he fell violently to the ground, like a shattered mountain. When the surviving night-roaming *rākṣasas* saw that Dhūmrākṣa had been slain, they were terrified. They fled back to Laṅkā with the leaping monkeys still slaughtering them. When the great son of Pavana had slain his enemy and sent rivers of blood flowing in all directions, he succumbed to the fatigue born from slaughtering his enemies. Then, honored by the monkeys, he experienced great joy.

Sarga 43

[1–2] When Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, heard that Dhūmrākṣa had been slain, he said this to the officer in charge of the garrison, who stood before him with his hands cupped in reverence: “Let unassailable *rākṣasas* of fearsome valor go forth led by Akampana, skilled in the use of every weapon.”

[3–8] Then, at the urging of the officer in charge of the garrison, fearsome-looking *rākṣasa* leaders, with fearsome eyes and bearing all kinds of weapons, marched forth. Wearing earrings of burnished gold, Akampana mounted a huge chariot and set forth, surrounded by fearsome *rākṣasas*. He was incapable of being shaken in a great battle, even by the gods themselves. Thus, he was called Akampana, “Unshakable,” and, in their midst, he was like the sun in blazing energy. But as he raced forth filled with fury in his eagerness to fight, the horses drawing his chariot were seized with a lethargy that had no apparent cause. Though normally he delighted in battle, his left eye now began to twitch, his face took on a sickly hue, and his voice began to crack. Although the weather had been clear, the sky grew dark and a harsh wind blew. Fierce birds and beasts all uttered fearsome cries.

[9–11] But ignoring these ominous signs, Akampana, whose shoulders were as massive as a lion’s and whose stride was that of a tiger, proceeded toward the battleground. And as the *rākṣasa* marched forth with his *rākṣasas*, he uttered a roar so mighty that it seemed to make the ocean itself tremble. Terrified by that sound, the vast army of monkeys, armed with trees and boulders, arrayed itself for battle.

[12–18] Then an extremely violent battle broke out between the monkeys and the *rākṣasas*, who were prepared to lay down their lives for the sake of Rāma and Rāvaṇa, respectively. The tawny monkeys and the *rākṣasas* were all exceedingly powerful heroes, all as huge as mountains. And they were eager to slaughter one another. As those swift warriors roared in battle and bellowed at one another in their fury, a tremendous din arose. The red dust, thick and terrible, kicked up by the *rākṣasas* and tawny monkeys, obscured the ten directions. Enveloped in that dust, as pale as floating silk, the opposing forces could not see each other on the battlefield. Because of that dust, neither pennant nor battle standard, armor nor horse, weapon nor chariot was visible. A tremendous din could be heard as they

roared and raced about in that tumultuous battle, though nothing at all could be seen.

[19–25] In their towering fury, tawny monkeys killed tawny monkeys in battle, while *rākṣasas* slaughtered *rākṣasas* in the darkness. And as the monkeys and *rākṣasas* slaughtered friend and foe alike, they drenched the earth with blood, making it slick with mud. The gouts of blood that were spattered all around settled the dust, and the ground was littered with dead bodies. With speed and power, the tawny monkeys and the *rākṣasas* slaughtered one another with trees, javelins, boulders, darts, maces, iron clubs, and cudgels of iron. Fighting with their arms, which resembled iron clubs, the tawny monkeys, fearsome in their deeds and huge as mountains, slaughtered the *rākṣasas* in battle. For their part, the furious *rākṣasas*, with darts and iron cudgels in hand, slaughtered the monkeys there with their pitiless weapons. But counterattacking, the tawny monkeys bravely seized those weapons from them and smashed the *rākṣasas* with huge trees and enormous boulders.

[26–27] At that juncture, the heroic tawny monkeys Kumuda, Nala, and Mainda, in a towering rage, charged with unparalleled speed. And, as if in play, those immensely swift leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys wrought tremendous slaughter with their trees in the front ranks of the *rākṣasa* army.

Sarga 44

[1–7] When he witnessed the immense feat accomplished by the foremost among the monkeys, Akampana gave vent to a savage fury in the midst of the battle. Seeing that feat of his enemies, he was beside himself with rage. Brandishing his mighty bow, he said these words to his charioteer: “Charioteer! Drive the chariot at once to where so many monkeys are slaughtering so many *rākṣasas* in battle. For there, armed with trees and boulders, mighty monkeys with fearsome bodies stand facing me. It appears that they have crushed the entire *rākṣasa* army, and therefore I wish to exterminate these boastful warriors.” Then, in his chariot, whose horses were whipped to a gallop, Akampana, foremost of chariot-warriors, in his fury, assailed the tawny monkeys with a hail of arrows. The monkeys were unable to stand before him in battle, much less to fight. Routed by Akampana’s arrows, every last one of them fled.

[8–10] Now, when mighty Hanumān saw that his kin had come under the power of Akampana and, indeed, the power of Mṛtyu, god of death, he rushed over. When the heroic leaders of the troops of leaping monkeys saw that great leaping monkey, they all gathered together around him in the battle. After the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys saw Hanumān take his stand there, they recovered their strength, placing their trust in that powerful warrior.

[11–18] But as Hanumān, who looked like a mountain, took his stand there, Akampana pelted him with arrows, just as great Indra might with torrents of rain. Paying no heed to the hail of sharp arrows falling on his body, the mighty monkey set his mind on killing Akampana. Laughing, Hanumān, the immensely powerful son of Māruta, charged that *rākṣasa*. As he did so, he shook the very earth, or so it seemed. Roaring and blazing with energy, he took on a form that was as irresistible as a blazing fire. Realizing that he had no weapon, that bull among tawny monkeys, in a transport of rage, swiftly ripped up a mountain by its roots. Grasping that huge mountain in one hand, mighty Māruti swung it about, uttering a tremendous roar. With it, he rushed upon the *rākṣasa* lord Akampana, just as Indra, smasher of citadels, with his *vajra*, rushed upon Namuci in battle. But when Akampana saw that mountain peak held aloft, he smashed it to pieces from afar with huge half-moon-headed arrows.

[19–23] Seeing the mountaintop shattered in midair by the *rākṣasa*'s arrows and fallen in pieces, Hanumān was beside himself with rage. Filled with rage and pride, the tawny monkey raced over to an *aśvakarṇa* tree, as tall as a mighty mountain, and swiftly tore it up by the roots. Seizing that *aśvakarṇa* tree with its vast trunk, Hanumān, blazing with splendor, swung it about in battle, laughing in supreme delight. Racing onward with tremendous speed and breaking down trees in his haste, Hanumān, in a towering rage, tore up the earth with the pounding of his feet. Wise Hanumān then smashed elephants along with their riders, chariot-warriors together with their chariots, and the *rākṣasa* foot soldiers as well.

[24–26] When the *rākṣasas* spied Hanumān, enraged and wreaking slaughter on the battlefield like Yama himself, the ender of all things, they fled in all directions. Seeing the enraged Hanumān rushing onward and terrifying the *rākṣasas*, heroic Akampana flew into a rage and roared.

Akampana then pierced immensely powerful Hanumān with fourteen sharp arrows that tore through his body.

[27–29] Riddled in this fashion with many volleys of arrows, heroic Hanumān resembled a densely forested mountain. Then, ripping up yet another tree and exerting unsurpassed force, he quickly struck the *rākṣasa* lord Akampana on the head. Struck with that tree by the wise monkey lord in his wrath, the *rākṣasa* fell and died.

[30–33] When the *rākṣasas* saw the *rākṣasa* lord Akampana lying on the ground slain, they all trembled, like trees in an earthquake. Terrified and defeated, the *rākṣasas* all dropped their weapons and fled to Laṅkā, pursued by the monkeys. Their hair flying, their pride shattered, their limbs running with sweat, they fled, panicked in defeat, gasping for breath. Trampling one another and glancing behind them again and again in their terror, they entered the city in total disarray.

[34–38] Once the *rākṣasas* had entered Laṅkā, all the immensely powerful tawny monkeys gathered and honored Hanumān. And for his part, Hanumān, endowed with strength, in great delight graciously honored all the tawny monkeys according to their merit. With a victorious air the tawny monkeys roared at the top of their lungs and dragged about those *rākṣasas* who were still alive. In encountering and slaughtering the *rākṣasas*, the great monkey Māruti achieved as much heroic glory as did Viṣṇu in slaying the great, terrible, and mighty *asura*, destroyer of his foes, in the vanguard of the hosts. Then the hosts of the gods, Rāma himself, and the exceedingly powerful Lakṣmaṇa, as well as mighty Vibhīṣaṇa, and the leaping monkeys, headed by Sugrīva, honored that monkey.

Sarga 45

[1–4] When the lord of the *rākṣasas* heard about the slaying of Akampana, he was enraged. His face somewhat downcast, he looked at his ministers. He brooded for a while, and then, after taking counsel with his counselors, he made a tour of the city of Laṅkā in order to inspect all its military encampments. He saw that the city of Laṅkā was protected by hosts of *rākṣasas*, surrounded by military encampments, and garlanded with pennants and banners. Perceiving that the city was besieged, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, angrily spoke at that critical moment to Prahasta, who was skilled in warfare.

[5–11] “You are skilled in warfare. I can see no means other than war to free this city, which is hard-pressed and closely besieged. Only Kumbhakarṇa, you—the general of my army—Indrajit, Nikumbha, or I would be capable of bearing such a burden. So you must take the troops from here and, placing them under your command, march forth swiftly for victory, to where all the forest-dwelling monkeys are. In the face of your sortie, the irresolute army of tawny monkeys, hearing the roar of the roaring lords of the *rākṣasas*, will surely flee. For monkeys are irresolute, undisciplined, and fickle minded. They will no more be able to withstand your roaring than are elephants the roaring of lions. Once the army has fled, Rāma, along with Saumitri, powerless and lacking support, will fall into your hands, Prahasta. We risk a great calamity, and victory is far from certain in this matter. So tell me what you think is best for us, whether I find it agreeable or not.”

[12–16] Addressed in this fashion by Rāvaṇa, Prahasta, the general of the army, said this to the lord of the *rākṣasas*, just as Uśanas might to the lord of the *asuras*: “We discussed this earlier, your majesty, together with your able counselors. We debated the matter with due consideration for one another. I concluded that our well-being could be assured only through the return of Sītā. I foresaw that, if she were not returned, it would mean war, and that is exactly what has come upon us. You have always honored me with gifts, tokens of respect, and all manner of kind words. Would I not now, at such a critical moment, do what pleases you? For I do not care for my life, my sons, my wives, or my wealth. Just watch me as I strive to sacrifice my life for your sake in battle.”

[17–19] When Prahasta, the general of the army, had addressed his master, Rāvaṇa, in this fashion, he said this to the troop commanders who stood before him: “Assemble a large force of *rākṣasas* for me at once. Once I have slain the forest-dwelling monkeys on the battlefield today with the crushing force of those thunderbolts that are my arrows, the carrion birds may eat of their flesh to their heart’s content.” Addressed in this fashion by Prahasta, the troop commanders, making haste, mustered their forces at the *rākṣasa*’s palace.

[20–23] Within the hour Laṅkā was filled with *rākṣasa* heroes who, armed with every sort of sharp weapon, resembled elephants. As they gratified the sacred fire, eater of oblations, and made obeisance to the

brahmans, a fragrant breeze began to blow, bearing the aroma of clarified butter. Prepared for battle and in great excitement, they took garlands of various kinds that had been consecrated with sacred spells and adorned themselves with them. When they saw their king, Rāvaṇa, the *rākṣasas*, clad in armor and armed with their bows, leapt up swiftly and encircled Prahasta.

[24–27] Then, taking leave of the king, Prahasta bid them beat the fearsome *bherī* drum as he mounted a celestial chariot well equipped for war. Yoked to the swiftest of horses and driven by a skilled charioteer, it rumbled like a great storm cloud and blazed with the brilliance of the moon and sun. With its serpent battle standard, it was irresistible. It had a splendid fender and was beautiful in every part. It was covered with a fretwork of gold and seemed almost to be laughing with its splendor. Then, once he had received his orders from Rāvaṇa, Prahasta mounted that chariot and, surrounded by his vast army, drove swiftly out of Laṅkā.

[28–30] As the general of the armies sallied forth, the rumble of war drums, like that of thunderclouds, and the sound of conches could be heard. In the vanguard, preceding Prahasta, marched huge *rākṣasas* with terrifying forms, uttering dreadful cries. And so, surrounded by that vast and dreadful army in military array and resembling a herd of elephants, he sallied forth from the eastern gate.

[31–926*–38] As Prahasta went forth swiftly in anger, surrounded by that army whose vast multitude was like the ocean, he resembled Kāla, the ender of all things. As he and the roaring *rākṣasas* set forth, their clamor caused all the creatures of Laṅkā to utter unnatural cries. Rising into the cloudless sky, birds that feed on flesh and blood wheeled in clockwise circles around his chariot. Dreadful jackals howled, belching forth flames of fire, the purifier. A blazing meteor fell from the sky, and a harsh wind blew. The heavenly bodies, occluding one another, were no longer visible. °And over the *rākṣasa*’s chariot, harshly thundering clouds poured down blood, drenching his followers. Meanwhile, a vulture, facing to the south, perched on the top of his battle standard. Although his charioteer was of the *sūta* caste and was a skilled driver of horses, his whip repeatedly slipped from his hand as he plunged into battle. And the extraordinary and radiant splendor that he displayed as he set forth vanished in an instant while his horses stumbled on the level ground.

[39–42] As Prahasta, famed for his strength and valor, marched forth, the monkey army advanced upon him for battle, armed with various weapons. Then a tumultuous sound arose from the tawny monkeys as they broke off trees and seized heavy boulders. Both armies—that of the hosts of *rākṣasas* and that of the forest-dwelling monkeys—were in a frenzy of excitement. They were swift, capable, and intent upon slaughtering one another. As they hurled their challenges at one another, one could hear a tremendous din. Then the evil-minded Prahasta hurled himself upon the army of the monkey king. He plunged into that fast-moving host, as a moth, intent upon death, plunges into the fire.

Sarga 46

[1–5] The vast army of roaring monkeys, powerful and infuriated, watched as Prahasta—huge, terrifying, of terrifying valor, and surrounded by *rākṣasas*—marched forth, bellowing. As the *rākṣasas*, eager for victory, hurled themselves upon the monkeys, the swords, javelins, broadswords, arrows, lances, cudgels, maces, iron clubs, darts, various battle-axes, and splendid bows they had taken up glittered. Bounding toward them, the bulls among the leaping monkeys, eager for battle, seized flowering trees and boulders that were long and broad.

[6–10] As the two vast forces clashed with each other, the one side raining stones, the other arrows, a huge battle broke out between them. Numerous *rākṣasas* slaughtered numerous leaders of the monkey troops in battle, while numerous monkeys slaughtered numerous *rākṣasas*. Some of the monkeys were rent with lances, others by discuses. Some were struck with iron clubs, while others were hacked with battle-axes. Still others fell to the ground, robbed of their life breaths, while some, ensnared in the continuous volley of arrows, were pierced to the heart. Some, cut in two with swords, fell to the ground, twitching. Still other monkeys were pierced by *rākṣasas* through their flanks with lances.

[11–14] But as for the monkeys, in their fury, they crushed hordes of *rākṣasas* to the ground on every side with trees and mountain peaks. Struck violently with fists and open hands, whose palms had the force of thunderbolts, the *rākṣasas*, their teeth and eyes knocked out, vomited blood from their mouths. A tumultuous sound—the cries of those screaming in their affliction and the lionlike roars of those who were bellowing—arose

from the tawny monkeys and the *rākṣasas* in battle. Rolling their eyes in rage, the pitiless monkeys and *rākṣasas*, following the path of heroes, fearlessly performed great feats.

[15–19] Prahasta's companions, Narāntaka, Kumbhahanu, Mahānāda, and Samunnata, all slaughtered forest-dwelling monkeys. But as they launched their swift attack, slaughtering the monkeys, Dvivida killed one of them, Narāntaka, with a mountain peak. Then the nimble-handed monkey Durmukha ripped up a huge tree by the roots and, with it, killed the *rākṣasa* Samunnata. Next, powerful Jāmbavān, in a towering rage, seized a huge boulder and brought it down upon Mahānāda's chest. Then the mighty *rākṣasa* Kumbhahanu, confronted by Tāra, was struck on the head with a tree and so died.

[20–22] Unable to endure this deed, Prahasta, mounted in his chariot, bow in hand, began a fearsome slaughter of the forest-dwelling monkeys. Then both armies swirled about like a maelstrom, and from them arose a sound like that of the immeasurable ocean when it is agitated. Skilled in combat, the furious Prahasta massacred the monkeys in that great battle with an immense torrent of arrows.

[23–29] Heaped up with the corpses of monkeys and *rākṣasas*, as if covered with fallen mountains, the earth looked ghastly. The ground, covered with torrents of blood, looked as if it were covered with blossoming *palāśa* trees in the month of Mādhava. Indeed, the battleground resembled a river. Masses of slain heroes formed its banks, and shattered weapons, its great trees. Torrents of blood made up its broad waters, and the ocean to which it flowed was Yama. Livers and spleens made up its deep mud, scattered entrails its waterweeds. Severed heads and trunks made up its fish, pieces of limbs, its grass. It was crowded with vultures in place of flocks of *haṃsas*, and it was swarming with adjutant storks instead of *sārasa* cranes. It was covered with fat in place of foam, and the cries of the wounded took the place of its gurgling. It was not to be forded by the faint of heart. Truly, it resembled a river at the end of the rains, swarming with *haṃsas* and *sārasa* cranes. Such was the river, all but impossible to cross, that the *rākṣasas* and the foremost of the monkeys forded, as might the leaders of elephant herds, a lotus pond covered with lotus pollen.

[30–35] Then Nīla spied Prahasta, who, mounted in his chariot and loosing torrents of arrows, was rapidly slaughtering the leaping monkeys.

Ripping up a tree by its roots, the great monkey struck the supremely unassailable Prahasta, who was attacking him. Struck by that tree, that bull among *rākṣasas* was enraged, and, roaring, he loosed hails of arrows upon the lord of the army of the leaping monkeys. Unable to deflect it, he shut his eyes and withstood it. Just as a prize bull might withstand a sudden autumnal squall, so did Nīla, his eyes tightly closed, endure with fortitude Prahasta's dreadful hail of arrows, so difficult to withstand. Enraged by that hail of arrows, Nīla killed Prahasta's horses, swift as thought, with a huge *sāla* tree.

[36–39] Stripped of his bow by him, Prahasta, the general of the army, seized a dreadful cudgel and leapt down from his chariot. Enraged, the two swift leaders of their armies, their bodies smeared with blood, stood there, like two bull elephants in rut. Slashing at each other with their razor-sharp fangs, they looked like a lion and a tiger and, indeed, moved just like them. Seeing victory within their grasp, those two heroes, who never turned back from battle, were as eager to gain glory as were Vṛtra and Vāsava.

[40–47] Then, making a supreme effort, Prahasta struck Nīla on the forehead with his cudgel, so that his blood gushed forth. His body smeared with blood, the great monkey seized an enormous tree and, in a rage, hurled it at Prahasta's chest. Disregarding that blow, the mighty *rākṣasa* seized his huge cudgel and charged at the mighty leaping monkey Nīla. Seeing Prahasta rushing furiously toward him with terrifying force, the swift and great monkey seized a huge boulder. In that battle, Nīla then swiftly brought the boulder down upon the head of the cudgel-warrior Prahasta, who was eager for combat. Hurled by that foremost of monkeys, that huge and terrible boulder shattered Prahasta's head into many pieces. Prahasta fell suddenly to the ground, like a tree cut off at the roots—stripped of life, stripped of splendor, stripped of strength, and stripped of his senses. Blood gushed copiously from his shattered head, as well as from his body, like a cataract from a mountain.

[48–51] When Prahasta had been slain by Nīla, his great and unshakable army of *rākṣasas*, who were now despondent, returned to Laṅkā. Once their general had been slain, they were no more able to hold their lines than would water upon reaching a shattered dam. With the leader of their army slain, the *rākṣasas* became dispirited. Proceeding to the palace of the *rākṣasa* lord, they stood silently, brooding. Then the immensely powerful

and victorious troop leader Nīla joined Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Being praised for the feat he had accomplished, he was greatly delighted.

Sarga 47

[1–6] When Prahasta, the protector of the *rākṣasa* forces, was slain in battle by Nīla, bull among leaping monkeys, the army of the *rākṣasa* king, equal in force to the ocean and armed with fearsome weapons, fled. They went and reported to the lord of the *rākṣasas* that his general had been slain by Nīla, the son of Agni, the purifier. No sooner had the lord of the *rākṣasas* heard their words than he gave way to anger. Upon hearing that Prahasta had been slain in battle, he was grief-stricken, and his mind was suffused with rage. He addressed the principal warriors of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, just as Indra might the principal warriors of the immortal gods: "One ought not underestimate an enemy who has destroyed the guardian of my army—the destroyer of the army of Indra—along with his followers and elephants. Therefore, without further deliberation, I myself will proceed to that extraordinary battlefront for the sake of victory and for the destruction of my enemies. I shall this very day with a hail of arrows consume that army of monkeys, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa included, as with blazing fires one might a forest."

[7–10] When he had spoken in this fashion, the enemy of the king of the immortal gods mounted a chariot yoked to a team of superb horses. It was as luminous as fire, and it glowed, blazing with splendor. Then, to the sounds of conches and *bherī* and *paṭaha* drums and to the clapping of arms, war shouts, and lionlike roars, the foremost of *rākṣasa* lords went forth, honored with auspicious hymns of praise. Surrounded by the foremost of the *rākṣasa* lords, flesh-eaters whose bodies resembled mountains or clouds and whose eyes blazed like fire, the purifier, he resembled Rudra, lord of the immortal gods, surrounded by his malignant spirits. Then, racing swiftly forth from the city, the immensely powerful *rākṣasa* spied the formidable army of monkeys. It was well prepared, armed with trees and boulders, and was roaring like the mighty ocean or a thundercloud.

[11–12] Closely followed by his army, Rāma, whose arms resembled serpent lords and whose majesty was immense, spied the exceedingly wrathful *rākṣasa* host and addressed Vibhīṣaṇa, foremost among those who bear weapons: "Who is in command of this unassailable army with its

various pennants, battle standards, and weapons, its darts, swords, lances, bows, and discuses, its war-elephants as huge as Himalaya, lord of mountains, and its fearless warriors?"

[13–18] And when Vibhīṣaṇa, who was equal in valor to Śakra, had heard those words of Rāma, he described for him the splendid army of those great bulls among the *rākṣasas*: "Your majesty, know that that huge *rākṣasa*, whose face is as red as the newly risen sun and who approaches mounted on an elephant's back, making its head tremble, is Akampana. The one who is mounted in a chariot and whose battle standard bears the king of beasts, he who brandishes a bow that resembles the bow of Śakra, and who, with his fierce and protuberant fangs, resembles an elephant, is called Indrajit, preeminent by virtue of a boon. And that immensely powerful bowman and superb chariot-warrior, who, with his gigantic body, resembles the Vindhya mountain, the western mountain, or Mount Mahendra, and who is twanging a bow of unparalleled size, is called Atikāya. And that huge hero, his eyes as red as the newly risen sun, who bellows harshly as he sits astride an elephant, its bells clanging, is called Mahodara. And the one mounted on a horse, which, with its trappings bright with gold, resembles a mountain shrouded in evening clouds, and who holds aloft a dart haloed with light, is Piśāca, equal in power to a thunderbolt.

[19–22] "And mounted upon a lordly and mountainous bull, he who comes grasping a keen lance that flashes like lightning, its power surpassing that of the thunderbolt, is the illustrious Triśiras. And there we see Kumbha, his form like that of a storm cloud, his chest broad, muscular, and splendid. His battle standard bears the king of serpents, and he is utterly intent, brandishing and twanging his bow. And the one who comes holding a blazing, smoking iron club, studded with diamonds and *jāmbūnada* gold, is the standard-bearer of the *rākṣasa* hosts, Nikumbha, of wondrous and fearsome deeds. And that huge warrior who appears mounted on a chariot—equipped with masses of bows, swords, and arrows, decked with pennants, and blazing like fire, the purifier—is Narāntaka, who can battle even mountain peaks.

[23–25] "And over there, where that fine white umbrella with its slender ribs is gleaming like the moon, that is where the great overlord of the *rākṣasas*, he who crushes the pride of even the gods, has appeared. Surrounded by his servants, whose faces are those of tigers, camels,

elephant lords, and the king of beasts—all rolling their eyes—he resembles Rudra, surrounded by his malignant spirits. He wears a crown, and, with his face adorned with swinging earrings and his body as fearsome as that of an elephant lord or the Vindhya mountain, that overlord of the *rākṣasas*, who crushes the pride of great Indra and Vaivasvata, shines like the sun."

[26–31] Then Rāma replied to Vibhīṣaṇa, subduer of his foes: "Ah! How resplendent is Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, with his tremendous blazing energy! Rāvaṇa is as hard to gaze upon as is the sun with its shining rays. Yet I can clearly make out his form, haloed with blazing energy. Not even the heroes among the gods and *dānavas* could possess a brightly shining form like that of the lord of the *rākṣasas*. And all the warriors of that immensely powerful *rākṣasa* bear blazing weapons. They all look like mountains, and they can all give battle even to mountains. Surrounded by those blazing warriors, fearsome in their valor, the king of the *rākṣasas* looks like Yama, the ender of all things, surrounded by fierce malignant spirits in bodily form." When he had spoken in this fashion, mighty Rāma took up his bow, drew forth a splendid arrow, and, accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, took his stand.

[32–33] Meanwhile, the great overlord of the *rākṣasas* addressed his powerful *rākṣasas*: "You are to remain calm and free from care at the city gates and the gates of the buildings on the main thoroughfares." Then, when he had summarily dismissed them and they had departed according to their orders, he clove through the flood of that ocean of monkeys, as might a great fish cleave the brimming waters of the sea.

[34–37] When Sugrīva, lord of the tawny monkeys, spied the *rākṣasa* lord racing suddenly toward him in battle with blazing bow and arrows, he tore off a huge mountain peak and charged at him. Seizing that mountain peak, whose slopes were thick with trees, he hurled it at the night-roaming *rākṣasa*. But Rāvaṇa, seeing it hurtling suddenly toward him, shattered it with arrows fletched with burnished gold. Once that mountain peak, with huge and splendid trees on its slopes, had fallen, shattered, to the ground, the lord of the *rākṣasa* folk took up an arrow that resembled a huge serpent. It looked like Yama, the ender of all things. In a rage, he grasped that arrow, whose force was equal to that of the wind or great Indra's thunderbolt and whose brilliance was that of a fire shooting out sparks. Then he loosed it in order to kill Sugrīva.

[38–40] Loosed by Rāvaṇa's arm, the sharp-tipped arrow, whose appearance was like that of Śakra's thunderbolt, struck Sugrīva with full force, piercing him, just as the fearsome javelin hurled by Guha once pierced Mount Krauñca. Agonized by that arrow, his mind reeling, the hero fell to the earth groaning. But when the *yātudhānas* saw him fallen senseless to the ground in battle, they roared with delight. But then the immense monkeys Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Sudaṃṣṭra, Ṛṣabha, Jyotimukha, and Nala took up boulders and charged the lord of the *rākṣasas*.

[41–43] But the overlord of the *rākṣasas* warded off their blows with swarms of sharp-tipped arrows. He then pierced the monkey lords with masses of arrows, whose feathers were adorned with *jāmbūnada* gold. Pierced by the arrows of that enemy of the thirty gods, the fearsome monkey lords fell to the ground. Then he completely covered the fierce monkey army with masses of arrows. Afflicted by Rāvaṇa's arrows, their heroic leaders fallen, and riven by the dart of fear, the tree-dwelling monkeys, wailing loudly, sought refuge with Rāma, the refuge of all.

[44–50] At once, the mighty bowman, great Rāma, took up his bow and came running, but Lakṣmaṇa accosted him and, his hands cupped in reverence, spoke these deeply significant words: [p]"Granted, my noble lord, you are perfectly capable of killing this evil-minded *rākṣasa*. Nonetheless, I should kill this despicable creature. Just grant me permission, my lord." Rāma of true valor and tremendous power replied to him: "Go, Lakṣmaṇa. You must exert yourself to the fullest in battle. For Rāvaṇa is enormously powerful and astonishingly valorous in battle. There is no doubt that, once his fury is aroused, it is impossible even for all the three worlds together to withstand him. You must seek out his weak points and defend your own. Stay focused and strive to protect yourself with your eye as well as your bow." Upon hearing those words of Rāma Rāghava, Saumitri embraced him. Then, after doing him honor and respectfully saluting him, he went off to battle. He whose arms resembled the trunks of elephants gazed upon Rāvaṇa, who, with his blazing, fearsome bow held high, was covering the monkeys—their bodies torn and scattered—with a massive hail of arrows.

[51–57] But when the immensely powerful Hanumān, son of Māruta, spied Rāvaṇa, he charged toward him, evading those masses of arrows. Reaching his chariot, wise Hanumān raised his right arm and, menacing Rāvaṇa, spoke these words: "Because of your invulnerability, you

vanquished the gods, *dānavas*, *gandharvas*, and *yakṣas*, along with the *rākṣasas*. But you should fear the monkeys. This upraised right hand of mine, with its five fingers, will drive the living spirit from your body where it has long dwelt.” When Rāvaṇa, of fearsome valor, heard those words of Hanumān, he spoke these words, his eyes red with rage: “Then strike quickly and without hesitation and so acquire eternal fame. Once I have thus determined your prowess, I will destroy you, monkey.” When the son of Vāyu heard those words of Rāvaṇa, he said these words: “Please keep in mind that, on an earlier occasion, I struck down your son Akṣa.”

[58–61] Addressed in this fashion, the immensely powerful Rāvaṇa, mighty lord of the *rākṣasas*, struck the son of Anila on the chest with the palm of his hand. Struck by him with the palm of his hand, he staggered back and forth. Then, infuriated, he struck that enemy of the immortal gods with the palm of his own hand. When that great monkey had struck him with the palm of his hand, ten-necked Rāvaṇa shook like a mountain during an earthquake. Seeing Rāvaṇa slapped down in this fashion in battle, the seers, monkeys, perfected beings, gods, and *asuras* cheered.

[62–65] Steadying himself, the immensely powerful Rāvaṇa spoke these words: “Well done, monkey! Your strength makes you a praiseworthy opponent for me.” But when Māruti was addressed in this fashion by Rāvaṇa, he said these words: “Since you are still alive, Rāvaṇa, then I say to hell with my strength! But why bother praising me? Now strike once again, fool! Then my fist shall lead you to the abode of Yama.” At these words of Māruti, Rāvaṇa’s anger blazed up once more. His eyes reddened, the mighty *rākṣasa* energetically raised his right fist and brought it down with force on the monkey’s chest. Struck once again on his broad chest, Hanumān staggered.

[66–71] Seeing that mighty Hanumān was stunned, the great chariot-warrior raced swiftly in his chariot toward Nīla. With his fearsome arrows that resembled serpents and pierced the vitals of his foes, he tormented Nīla, lord of the army of tawny monkeys. Hard-pressed by that stream of arrows, Nīla, lord of the monkey army, with one hand, hurled a mountain peak at the overlord of the *rākṣasas*. Meanwhile, wise and powerful Hanumān, now recovered and eager for battle, saw that Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, was engaged in battle with Nīla. Angrily he said, “It is not appropriate to attack someone who is locked in battle with another.” Then,

powerful Rāvaṇa smashed that peak with seven sharp-tipped arrows so that it fell, shattered.

[72–76] Seeing the mountain peak shattered, Nīla, the lord of the army of tawny monkeys, slayer of enemy heroes, flared up with anger, like the fire of universal destruction. In that battle, Nīla then hurled *aśvakarṇas*, *dhavas*, *sālas*, mangoes in full bloom, and various other trees as well. But Rāvaṇa splintered those trees as they came toward him. He then deluged Nīla, the son of Agni, the purifier, with a very fearsome hail of arrows. But inundated by that hail of arrows, like a great mountain by a storm cloud, he shrunk his body and alighted on the tip of Rāvaṇa's battle standard. Seeing the son of Agni, the purifier, perched on the tip of his battle standard, Rāvaṇa flared up in anger. Nīla then roared.

[77–79] When Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān, and Rāma saw that tawny monkey first on the tip of Rāvaṇa's battle standard, next on the point of his bow, and then on the top of his crown, they were amazed. Even the immensely powerful Rāvaṇa himself was astonished at the monkey's swiftness. He then invoked the wondrous and blazing divine weapon-spell of Agni. Then the leaping monkeys, observing that Rāvaṇa was baffled in combat by Nīla's swiftness, chattered in delight as they watched intently.

[80–84] Enraged by the screeching of the monkeys, his mind utterly confused, Rāvaṇa could do nothing. Taking up an arrow charged with the divine weapon-spell of Agni, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa fixed his glance on Nīla, who was perched on the head of his battle standard. Then Rāvaṇa, the powerful lord of the *rākṣasas*, spoke: "Your swiftness derives from this extraordinary trickery of yours, monkey. Now try to save your life, if you can, monkey. You seem to appear in many different forms. Nonetheless, this arrow, loosed by me and charged with a divine weapon-spell, will rob you of your life, even as you seek to save it."

[85–89] When he had spoken in this fashion, great-armed Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, nocked the arrow and, with that divine weapon, struck the lord of the army. Struck in the chest and burned by that arrow charged with the divine weapon-spell, Nīla fell at once to the ground. Although he had fallen to the ground on his knees, nonetheless, because he was endowed with his father's divine power as well as his own blazing energy, he was not killed. Seeing that the monkey had lost consciousness, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, still eager for battle, raced toward Saumitri in his chariot that thundered like

a storm cloud. His spirit undaunted, Saumitri addressed Rāvaṇa, who was twanging his immeasurable bow: “Come after me, lord of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*! You shouldn’t be fighting with monkeys.”

[90–93] Hearing his words and the fearsome resonant twanging of his bowstring, the *rākṣasa* king confronted Saumitri where he stood and spoke these wrathful words: “How fortunate for me, Rāghava, that you, headed for destruction, your wits disordered, have come into my sight. This very moment, stricken by my streams of arrows, you shall depart for the land of death.” As Rāvaṇa was bellowing in this fashion, exposing the white tips of his fangs, Lakṣmaṇa, undaunted, replied: “The truly powerful do not bellow, your majesty. Foremost of evildoers, you are merely boasting. I know all about your courage, lord of the *rākṣasas*, your strength, your valor, and your prowess. Here I stand, bow and arrows in hand. Come on! What is the use of this vain boasting?”

[94–98] The overlord of the *rākṣasas* was furious at being spoken to in this fashion, and he loosed seven beautifully fletched arrows. But Lakṣmaṇa cut them to pieces with arrows whose tips and edges were honed and whose fletching was adorned with gold. When the lord of Laṅkā saw them suddenly cut to pieces, like serpent lords whose coils are cloven, he gave way to anger and loosed still other sharp arrows. But Rāma’s younger brother released from his bow a fierce shower of arrows. With these arrows —razor-tipped, half-moon-headed, barbed, and crescent-headed—he calmly cut Rāvaṇa’s arrows to pieces. Then, swiftly fitting to his bow sharp-tipped arrows whose luster was that of blazing fire and whose impact was equal to that of great Indra’s *vajra* or the thunderbolt, Lakṣmaṇa released them in an effort to kill the overlord of the *rākṣasas*. But the lord of the *rākṣasas* cut them to pieces. Then, when he had done so, he struck Lakṣmaṇa in the forehead with an arrow given to him by self-existent Brahmā—its luster equal to that of the fire of universal destruction.

[99–103] Tormented by Rāvaṇa’s arrow, Lakṣmaṇa staggered and slackened his grip on his bow. Then, regaining consciousness with difficulty, he cut to pieces the bow of that enemy of Indra, lord of the thirty gods. Then, with three sharp-tipped arrows, Dāśarathi struck him whose bow was shattered. Tormented by those arrows, the king staggered but with difficulty regained consciousness. Tormented by arrows, his limbs bathed in sweat, drenched in blood, his bow shattered, the immensely powerful

enemy of the gods then, in that battle, seized a javelin he had been given by self-existent Brahmā. The lord of the *rākṣasa* kingdom then swiftly hurled that blazing lance at Saumitri. Terrifying the monkey armies, it resembled a smokeless fire. As it flew toward him, the younger brother of Bharata struck it with divine weapons and with arrows that blazed like sacrificial fires. Nonetheless, the javelin plunged deep into Dāśarathi's broad chest.

[104–107] Wounded in the breast by the javelin of Brahmā, Saumitri recalled that he himself was an inconceivable portion of Viṣṇu. Then, although he grasped Saumitri, humbler of the *dānavas*' pride, with both his arms, that thorn in the side of the gods was unable to budge him. With his two arms, he was able to lift the Himalayas, Mount Mandara, Mount Meru, or even the three worlds along with the immortal gods; yet, in that battle, he could not lift Bharata's younger brother. When Rāvaṇa saw that Lakṣmaṇa, who was a portion of Viṣṇu in a human body, was unconscious, he was astonished.

[108–112] At this juncture, Hanumān, son of Vāyu, enraged, rushed at Rāvaṇa. In his rage, he struck him on the chest with a fist like adamant. The blow of that fist made Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, slump to his knees on the floor of his chariot. He swayed for a moment and collapsed. Seeing Rāvaṇa of fearsome valor unconscious in battle, the seers, monkeys, and gods, together with Vāsava, cheered. But powerful Hanumān picked up Lakṣmaṇa, who had been wounded by Rāvaṇa, in both his arms and carried him to Rāghava. For on account of the affection and supreme devotion of the son of Vāyu, Lakṣmaṇa became light for that monkey, even though he could not be budged by his enemies.

[113–115] Meanwhile, the javelin extracted itself from Saumitri, who was unconquerable in battle, and returned to its place in Rāvaṇa's chariot. But powerful Rāvaṇa, regaining consciousness in that great battle, took up sharp arrows and grasped a great bow. And Lakṣmaṇa, destroyer of his foes, recalling that he himself was an inconceivable portion of Viṣṇu, was freed of that arrow and restored to health.

[116–119] Meanwhile, when Rāghava saw that the great heroes of that vast host of monkeys had been struck down in battle, he raced toward Rāvaṇa. But Hanumān, intercepting him, spoke these words: "You should climb on my back and punish this *rākṣasa*." When Rāghava heard the words uttered by Hanumān, son of Vāyu, that hero immediately climbed up

on the great monkey. Then the overlord of men gazed upon Rāvaṇa mounted on his chariot in battle. Keeping him in sight, immensely powerful Rāghava raced toward him, as did the wrathful Viṣṇu, his weapon raised, toward Vairocana.

[120–125] He made his bowstring resound sharply with a sound like the crash of a thunderbolt. Then, in a deep voice, he addressed the lord of the *rākṣasas*: "Stay where you are! For after doing me such an injury, tiger among *rākṣasas*, where can you go to escape me? If you were to fly for refuge to Indra, Vaivasvata, Sūrya, bringer of light, self-existent Brahmā, Agni Vaiśvānara, or even Śiva, bringer of auspiciousness—even if you were to flee to the ten directions—still, no matter where you might go, you would not escape me now. And he whom you struck with your javelin this day will soon return in his desire to cause you sorrow. This very day, he will bring death to you in battle, king of the *rākṣasa* hosts, and to your sons and wives as well." Upon hearing Rāghava's words, the *rākṣasa* lord struck the great monkey with sharp arrows that were like the flames of the fire at the end of time. But since he was endowed with innate blazing energy, that blazing energy only increased as he was struck with those arrows by the *rākṣasa* in battle.

[126–132] But immensely powerful Rāma, seeing that that tiger among leaping monkeys had been wounded by Rāvaṇa, was overwhelmed with rage. Advancing toward Rāvaṇa's chariot, Rāma cut it to pieces with his well-fletched arrows along with its wheels, horses, battle standard, umbrella, and great pennants, as well as its charioteer, missiles, lances, and swords. Then he swiftly struck that enemy of Indra on his broad and beautiful chest with an arrow that resembled Indra's *vajra* or a thunderbolt, just as Lord Indra himself might strike Mount Meru with his *vajra*. That heroic king, who had neither trembled nor staggered at the blows of Indra's *vajra* or of thunderbolts, now, struck by Rāma's arrow, was sorely afflicted. He staggered and dropped his bow. Perceiving that the overlord of the *rākṣasas* was dazed, magnanimous Rāma took up a blazing, half-moon-headed arrow and, with it, swiftly cut off his crown, which shone like the sun. Then, in the midst of the battle, Rāma addressed the lord of the *rākṣasas*, who, with the top of his crown severed, had lost his royal splendor and resembled a serpent robbed of its venom or a darkened sun, its rays extinguished: "You have performed great and fearsome deeds and

struck down my heroic warriors. Still, recognizing that you are exhausted from all that, I shall not bring you under the sway of death with my arrows."

[133–135] Addressed in this fashion, the king, wounded with arrows, his pride and excitement crushed, his bow cut to pieces, his horses and charioteer slain, and his great crown cut off, quickly entered Laṅkā. Once the mighty lord of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, the enemy of the *dānavas* and the gods, had returned to Laṅkā, Rāma, along with Lakṣmaṇa, removed those arrows from the tawny monkeys in the forefront of the great battle. When the enemy of Indra, lord of the thirty gods, had been humbled, the gods and the *asuras*, the hosts of creatures, the guardians of the directions, and the denizens of the deep, along with the seers, the great serpents, and the creatures of land and water, rejoiced.

Sarga 48

[1–4] Now, when the king, afflicted by the fear of Rāma's arrows, his pride humbled, reentered the citadel of Laṅkā, he was nearly insensible with agitation. For great Rāghava had vanquished the king, as might a lion, an elephant, or Garuḍa, a serpent. Remembering Rāghava's arrows that, like the staff of Brahmā, blazed with the brilliance of lightning, the lord of the *rākṣasas* shuddered. Seated on his magnificent heavenly golden throne, Rāvaṇa gazed at the *rākṣasas* and said these words:

[5–9] "Since I, who am the equal of great Indra, have been defeated by a mere human, it is clear that the supreme austerities I performed have all been in vain. And those frightening words of Brahmā, 'Know that you still must fear humans,' have now come back to haunt me, for they have proven true. For although I obtained invulnerability with respect to the gods, *dānavas*, *gandharvas*, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, and great serpents, I did not request it with respect to humans. Bearing this in mind, you must exert yourselves. Let *rākṣasas* be stationed on top of the gateways at the main thoroughfares. And you must awaken the incomparably profound Kumbhakarṇa, crusher of the pride of the gods and *dānavas*, who has been overcome by Brahmā's curse."

[10–15] Realizing that Prahasta had been slain and he himself defeated, mighty Rāvaṇa dispatched a fearsome army of *rākṣasas*: "Exert yourselves at the gateways! Ascend the ramparts! Kumbhakarṇa, who is overwhelmed

by sleep, must be awakened! That *rākṣasa* sleeps for six, seven, eight, even nine months at a time. Nonetheless, you must awaken mighty Kumbhakarṇa immediately. For that great-armed warrior, greatest of all the *rākṣasas*, will quickly slaughter the monkeys and the two princes in battle. Addicted to this vulgar pleasure, Kumbhakarṇa sleeps all the time in a stupor. But once Kumbhakarṇa is awakened, my grief at being humiliated by Rāma in that terrible battle will be banished. For of what use to me is that hero, whose strength is equal to that of Śakra, if he can be of no assistance to me when I am in such trouble?"

[16–19] Upon hearing those words of the *rākṣasa* lord, the *rākṣasas* proceeded in great agitation to the residence of Kumbhakarṇa. As instructed by Rāvaṇa, those eaters of flesh and blood gathered perfumes, garlands, and food and went on their way hurriedly. As they passed through the huge gates into Kumbhakarṇa's lovely cavern, which extended a league on every side and was redolent with every fragrance, the immensely powerful *rākṣasas* were driven back by the force of his breath. Nonetheless, retaining their footing with difficulty, they managed to enter the cavern with effort.

[20–23] Once they had entered that charming and splendid cavern, its floors inlaid with gold, they spied that tiger among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, sleeping. He was fearsome to behold. All together they began to rouse grotesque Kumbhakarṇa, who lay sleeping in the midst of his long sleep, like some crumbled mountain. They stared at the immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa, tiger among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, as he lay there, his body hairs bristling, hissing like a great serpent, and terrifying them with his stertorous breathing. With his fearsome nostrils and his huge mouth as wide as the underworld Pātāla, he was fearsome to behold.

[24–27] Then those mighty *rākṣasas* placed before Kumbhakarṇa a supremely gratifying heap of meats as huge as Mount Meru. Those tigers among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, set down massive quantities of deer, buffalo, and boar—an astonishing heap of food. Then those foes of the thirty gods placed before Kumbhakarṇa pots of blood and strong drink of various kinds. And they smeared that scorcher of his foes with costly sandalwood paste and covered him with heavenly garlands and fragrant perfumes.

[28–31] The *yātudhānas* released fragrant incense and sang the praises of that scorcher of his foes, roaring loudly in their thousands, like storm

clouds. They sounded conches, whose luster was like that of the hare-marked moon, and they roared tumultuously all together in their impatience. Those night-roaming *rākṣasas* roared, clapped their upper arms, and shook him. Thus, they made a huge commotion in order to awaken Kumbhakarṇa. Upon hearing that din—the sound of conches and *bherī* and *paṭaha* drums, along with the clapping of the upper arms, the shouting, and the lionlike roars—the birds, who were flying in all directions and soaring into the heavens, suddenly came crashing down.

[32–36] When the huge, sleeping Kumbhakarṇa was still not awakened by those cacophonous sounds, all the *rākṣasa* troops took up bludgeons, cudgels, and maces. Then, with mountain peaks, cudgels, maces, trees, war hammers, and their palms and fists, those huge *rākṣasas* began to belabor Kumbhakarṇa as he slept there comfortably on the ground. However, because of the wind caused by the *rākṣasa* Kumbhakarṇa's stertorous breathing, the *rākṣasas*, although powerful, were unable to remain standing before him. Then those *rākṣasas* of fearsome valor, ten thousand strong, all together loudly sounded their *mṛdaṅga*, *paṇava*, and *bherī* drums, along with many conches and jugs, right in front of him. Roaring and beating him, they tried to rouse him as he lay there, like a mass of collyrium. But he was oblivious to it all.

[37–41] When they were still unable to wake him, they resorted to more drastic and more violent efforts. With staves, whips, and goads, they drove horses, camels, donkeys, and elephants over him, and they sounded conches and *bherī* and *mṛdaṅga* drums with all their might. They struck his limbs with great bundles of sticks, war hammers, and cudgels, wielded with all their might. That tremendous din filled all of Laṅkā together with its surrounding woods and mountains. But still he did not awaken. Next, they incessantly and simultaneously beat a thousand *bherī* drums with drumsticks of refined gold, all around him.

[42–46] But when in that profound slumber brought about by the power of the curse he still did not awaken, the night-roaming *rākṣasas* became furious. All those *rākṣasas* of fearsome valor were in a towering rage. Some of them, in their effort to awaken the *rākṣasa*, actually assaulted him. Some beat *bherī* drums, while others raised a tremendous racket. Some of them tore out his hair, while others bit his ears. Nonetheless, Kumbhakarṇa, plunged in his profound slumber, did not stir. Other powerful *rākṣasas*,

armed with mallets and war hammers, brought them down on his head, chest, and limbs. Even though that huge *rākṣasa* was hammered all over with hundred-slayers tied to ropes and straps, he still did not awaken.

[47–51] But finally, when they made a thousand elephants trample across his body, Kumbhakarṇa, aware of a slight sensation, at last awoke. Ignoring the tremendous blows of mountaintops and trees that were being hurled down upon him, he suddenly leapt up at the violent interruption of his sleep, yawning and oppressed by fear and hunger. Stretching wide his arms, which were as strong as mountain peaks and resembled two mountain peaks or great serpents, that night-roaming *rākṣasa* yawned grotesquely, opening his mouth, which was like the gaping mare's head fire that lies beneath the sea. And as he yawned prodigiously, his mouth, as wide as the underworld Pātāla, resembled the sun, maker of day, risen over the summit of Mount Meru. Yawning, the enormously powerful night-roaming *rākṣasa* was at last fully awake. His breath was like a gale from the mountains.

[52–55] As Kumbhakarṇa arose, his appearance was like that of a drenching storm cloud crossed by *balāka* cranes at summer's end. His enormous eyes, which resembled blazing fires and whose luster was like that of lightning, looked like two great blazing planets. Since he was hungry, he ate the meat. And since he was thirsty, he drank the blood. Then that foe of Śakra drank wine and a pot of marrow. At last, when the night-roaming *rākṣasas* reckoned that he was sated, they approached him and surrounded him on every side with their heads bowed.

[56–60] First, that bull among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, reassured the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos. Then, astonished at having been awakened, he said this to the *rākṣasas*: [q]"Why have you gentlemen put so much effort into waking me? I trust that all is well with the king and that no danger of any kind presents itself. On the other hand, some great danger from enemies must surely have presented itself, on account of which you gentlemen have so urgently awakened me. I shall this very day eliminate the danger to the king of the *rākṣasas*. I shall cast down great Indra or smash Anala, god of fire. For no one would have awakened me so violently from my slumber for some trivial reason. So now tell me truthfully the reason for awakening me."

[61–66] Then Yūpākṣa, a minister of the king, cupping his hands in reverence, replied to that tamer of his foes, Kumbhakarṇa, who was

speaking so agitatedly in this fashion: "The gods have never presented us with any danger, nor have we been presented with any danger from the *daityas* or *dānavas* such as now presents itself to us from a man, your highness. Lañkā is surrounded by monkeys who look like mountains. A catastrophic danger from Rāma, inflamed at the abduction of Sītā, now confronts us. Earlier, a single monkey burned down the great citadel and slaughtered Prince Akṣa along with his troops and elephants. Even the lord of the *rākṣasas* himself, Rāvaṇa Paulastya, the thorn in the side of the gods, was dismissed in battle by Rāma, whose splendor is that of the sun, with the words, 'You are as good as dead.' What neither the gods nor the *daityas* and *dānavas* could do to the king has been done to him by Rāma, who then released him, sparing his life."

[67–71] When Kumbhakarṇa had heard these words of Yūpākṣa and had learned of his brother's defeat in battle, he opened his eyes wide and said this to him: "This very day, Yūpākṣa, I shall slaughter in battle the entire army of tawny monkeys along with Lakṣmaṇa and Rāghava. Only then will I go to see Rāvaṇa. I shall sate the *rākṣasas* with the flesh and blood of the tawny monkeys, and then I shall drink the blood of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa all by myself." Upon hearing those arrogant words of which the defects were magnified by anger, Mahodara, one of the principal warriors of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, cupped his hands in reverence and said these words: "Only after you have heard Rāvaṇa's words and carefully considered the advantages and disadvantages of any action should you attempt to conquer our enemies in battle, great-armed warrior."

[72–78] Upon hearing these words of Mahodara, the mighty and enormously powerful Kumbhakarṇa prepared to set forth, surrounded by *rākṣasas*. Once they had awakened Kumbhakarṇa, fearsome in eye, form, and valor, the *rākṣasas* went in haste to the palace of ten-necked Rāvaṇa. When they arrived there, all those night-roaming *rākṣasas*, joining their cupped palms in reverence, addressed ten-necked Rāvaṇa as he sat on his splendid throne. "Your brother Kumbhakarṇa is awake, bull among *rākṣasas*. How should he proceed? Should he sally forth directly or will you first see him here?" Delighted, Rāvaṇa replied to those *rākṣasas* who had come there, "I wish to see him here, duly honored." Saying, "So be it," all those *rākṣasas* went back again and, as instructed by Rāvaṇa, said these

words to Kumbhakarṇa: “The king, that bull among all the *rākṣasas*, wishes to see you. So set your mind on going and bring delight to your brother.”

[79–83] Upon receiving his brother’s command, mighty and unassailable Kumbhakarṇa said, “So be it,” and leapt up from his bed. In high spirits, he rinsed his mouth, bathed, and adorned himself splendidly. As he was thirsty, he urgently sent for invigorating drink. Then, hastening on his account, the *rākṣasas*, at Rāvaṇa’s command, quickly brought intoxicating drink and various kinds of food. After first drinking a thousand jars, he made ready to go. Filled with energy and strength, exhilarated, and slightly intoxicated, Kumbhakarṇa, in his frenzy, resembled Yama, who brings time itself to an end.

[84–87] As Kumbhakarṇa made his way toward his brother’s palace, accompanied by an army of *rākṣasas*, his footsteps shook the very earth. As he went on his way, Kumbhakarṇa flooded the royal highway with light through his own bodily radiance, as does the thousand-rayed sun the earth with its beams. Encircled with a garland of hands cupped in reverence, he resembled Indra of the hundred sacrifices on his way to the abode of self-existent Brahmā. Seeing him, so huge and extraordinary, diademed and tall as a mountain peak, as if matching the sun itself with his innate splendor, the forest-dwelling monkeys were stricken with fear and fled in all directions. Some ran for refuge to Rāma, the refuge of all, while others, in their panic, fell down. Some, in their panic, fled in all directions, while others, stricken with fear, simply lay on the ground.

Sarga 49

[1–3] Huge, diademed Kumbhakarṇa looked like a mountain. Seeing him striding along as did Lord Nārāyaṇa long ago through the heavens, mighty and immensely powerful Rāma took up his bow and stared at him. But when the great army of monkeys spied Kumbhakarṇa, who, adorned with his golden armlets, looked like a storm cloud charged with rain, it broke and ran once more.

[4–7] When he saw his army on the run and the *rākṣasa* looming above him, Rāma, in his amazement, said this to Vibhīṣaṇa: “Who is that tawny-eyed, diademed hero, who looks like a mountain and looms over Laṅkā, like a storm cloud laced with lightning? From here he looks like some great and solitary flagstaff raised high above the earth. At the sight of him all the

monkeys are scattering every which way. Tell me, who is this enormous creature? Is he a *rākṣasa* or an *asura*? I have never seen a creature like him before."

[8–12] Thus questioned by Prince Rāma Kākutstha, tireless in action, wise Vibhīṣaṇa said this to him: "That is Kumbhakarṇa, the valorous son of Viśravas, who defeated both Vaivasvata and Vāsava in battle. In battle, Rāghava, he has crushed thousands of gods, *dānavas*, *yakṣas*, great serpents, flesh-eating demons, *gandharvas*, *vidyādharas*, and *kinnaras*. The thirty gods themselves were unable to kill him, mistakenly thinking that mighty Kumbhakarṇa with his dreadful eyes and lance in hand was, in fact, Kāla himself. For mighty Kumbhakarṇa is powerful by nature, while the power of the other *rākṣasa* lords derives from the gift of boons.

[13–18] "No sooner had this huge *rākṣasa* been born than, tormented by hunger, he devoured many thousands of living beings. As they were being devoured, the creatures, stricken with terror, ran for refuge to Śakra and reported the matter to him. In a rage, great Indra, the wielder of the sharp *vajra*, struck Kumbhakarṇa with it. Struck by Śakra's *vajra*, the huge *rākṣasa* staggered and roared loudly in his rage. Upon hearing the roars of wise Kumbhakarṇa, who was roaring loudly, the earth, already terrified, became still more so. And in his rage at great Indra, mighty Kumbhakarṇa tore out one of Airāvata's tusks and, with it, struck Vāsava on the chest. Wounded by Kumbhakarṇa's blow, Vāsava staggered. Then all at once the gods, brahman-seers, and *dānavas* despaired.

[19–23] "Śakra then proceeded with all creatures to the abode of self-existent Brahmā Prajāpati, where they told him about Kumbhakarṇa's vicious nature, his devouring creatures and assaulting the gods: 'If he continues to devour creatures in this fashion, the whole world will be empty within no time.' When Brahmā, grandfather of all the worlds, had heard those words of Vāsava, he sent for the *rākṣasas* and fixed his gaze on Kumbhakarṇa. When Prajāpati, lord of creatures, saw Kumbhakarṇa, he was frightened. Fixing him with his glance, self-existent Brahmā took a deep breath and said this: 'Undoubtedly, you were created by Paulastya for the destruction of the world. Therefore, you shall sleep from this day forward as if you were dead.' That very instant, overcome by Brahmā's curse, he collapsed right in front of the Lord.

[24–27] “Then, profoundly agitated, Rāvaṇa spoke these words: ‘You are cutting down a full-grown golden tree, just as it is about to bear fruit. It is not right, Prajāpati, to curse one’s own grandson in this fashion. Since your words may never prove false, there is no doubt but that he will sleep. Still, you should set some time limit to his sleeping and waking.’ Upon hearing Rāvaṇa’s words, self-existent Brahmā said this: ‘He shall sleep for six months and wake for but a single day. But on that one day, this ravening hero will roam the earth with gaping mouth, devouring all creatures, like a raging conflagration.’

[28–31] “But now King Rāvaṇa, in a desperate situation and terrified of your valor, has had Kumbhakarṇa awakened. That hero of terrifying valor has emerged from his lair. Soon, in a towering rage, he will race about, devouring the monkeys. At the mere sight of Kumbhakarṇa, the tawny monkeys have fled. How then will the monkeys stand up to him when he is in the fury of battle? Let’s tell all the tawny monkeys that he is just some giant mechanical man. Once they accept that, they will lose their fear of him.”

[32–37] Upon hearing Vibhīṣaṇa’s reasonable and encouraging words, Rāghava addressed Nīla, the general of the army: “Go, Nīla Pāvaki! Put all the troops into battle formation and take up your post. Seize control of the gateways, thoroughfares, and bridges of Laṅkā. Let all the monkeys collect mountain peaks, trees, and boulders and take up their posts, well armed and boulders in hand.” Thus instructed by Rāghava, Nīla, that elephant among monkeys and general of the army of tawny monkeys, gave his orders accordingly to the monkey troops. Then Gavākṣa, Śarabha, Hanumān, Aṅgada, and Nala, who themselves resembled mountains, seized mountain peaks and approached the gateways. With boulders held aloft and trees in their hands, the formidable army of tawny monkeys resembled a vast and formidable mass of huge storm clouds, looming up against a mountain.

Sarga 50

[1–4] Meanwhile, that tiger among the *rākṣasas* Kumbhakarṇa, whose valor was tremendous, proceeded along the majestic royal highway, groggy with sleep and drink. As that supremely invincible warrior continued on his way, he was surrounded by thousands of *rākṣasas* and strewn with showers of blossoms raining from the houses along his route. At length he spied the

vast and beautiful mansion of the *rākṣasa* lord, which, covered with a fretwork of gold, blazed with the radiance of the sun. Then he entered the dwelling of the *rākṣasa* lord, as might the sun a mass of clouds. There, just as Śakra might behold the self-existent Brahmā seated on his throne, he beheld from afar his elder brother seated on his.

[5–10] Now that he had arrived at his brother's house and had entered its innermost chamber, he spied his elder seated dejectedly in the flying palace Puṣpaka. But when ten-necked Rāvaṇa saw that Kumbhakarṇa had arrived, he quickly sat up in great excitement and had him ushered into his presence. Immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa made his obeisance at the feet of his brother, who sat upon his throne, and said, "What task must I perform?" Then, springing up in great delight, Rāvaṇa embraced him. When he had been embraced by his brother and duly welcomed, Kumbhakarṇa took a superb, splendid, and heavenly seat. Immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa settled himself on his seat. Then, his eyes red with rage, he said these words to Rāvaṇa: "Why have you put such effort into waking me, your majesty? Tell me. Who are you afraid of? Who will become a ghost this very day?"

[11–15] His eyes rolling slightly, Rāvaṇa spoke these words to his angry brother Kumbhakarṇa, who sat beside him: "As of today, you have been asleep for a very long time, mighty warrior. Since you were resting comfortably, you do not know of the danger Rāma poses to me. This powerful Rāma Dāśarathi has crossed the ocean with Sugrīva and an army and is cutting us off at the roots. Just look at the woods and parklands of Laṅkā! He has turned them all into one big sea of monkeys after easily coming here via a bridge. The very foremost among the *rākṣasas* have been slaughtered in battle by the monkeys. But never do I see the destruction of the monkeys in battle.

[16–19] "You must understand that I have exhausted all my resources. You must save the city of Laṅkā in which only the children and the aged remain. Great-armed warrior, you must accomplish this most formidable task for your brother's sake. I have never before spoken in this fashion to anyone, scorcher of your foes. For, my brother, I have placed my love and my fullest confidence in you. Many times, bull among *rākṣasas*, in our wars with the gods and *asuras*, you faced off against them and defeated them in battle. For there is not to be found among all living beings any one as mighty as you. You must do me this supreme favor and service. You, who

love battle and love your kinsmen, must, according to your pleasure, scatter the army of our enemies with your own blazing energy, just as a strong gale might spring up to scatter the clouds of autumn."

Sarga 51

[1–4] When Kumbhakarṇa had heard the lamentation of the king of the *rākṣasas*, he laughed and then said these words: "Since you paid no heed to those who had your welfare at heart, you have now met with that very calamity that we foresaw earlier, at the council of ministers. You are suffering the immediate consequences of your wicked deed, just as evildoers suffer an instant descent into their respective hells. You carried out this action, your majesty, without first reflecting upon it. In the sheer arrogance of your strength, you did not consider the consequences.

[5–10] "A person who, relying upon his royal authority, does later what ought to be done first, and first what ought to be done later, has no comprehension of the distinction between sound and unsound policy. Actions that are performed in inverted order, without reference to the proper time and place, are harmful, just as are offerings of food to impious persons. A king who perceives the fivefold application of the three types of action after coming to a decision with his ministers remains on the proper path. So does a king who desires to reach a decision in conformance with the texts on polity, who pays heed to his ministers, and who recognizes his true friends by virtue of his own intelligence. A man should pursue all three human ends—righteousness, profit, and pleasure—at their proper times, lord of the *rākṣasas*, either all at once or two at a time. And a king or one exercising royal power who learns which among these three is foremost and yet does not take it to heart finds all his great learning to be in vain.

[11–13] "But, foremost among *rākṣasas*, the self-possessed monarch should consult with his ministers concerning the timely use of bribery, conciliation, sowing dissension, coercive force, or any combination of these means, as well as the proper and improper ways of applying them. He who does so and practices righteousness, profit, and pleasure at their appropriate times never comes to grief in this world. And the king who, together with ministers who understand the true nature of things and have his interests at heart, deliberates over what he ought and ought not do in this world in order to achieve a beneficial result thrives.

[14–20] “There are some men—dumb brutes, in fact—utterly ignorant of the import of the *śāstras*, who, once they are brought into discussions of policy, wish to speak out of sheer arrogance. One should not follow the pernicious advice of those who are ignorant of the *śāstras*, and unfamiliar with the treatises on statecraft, and simply eager to enhance their own positions. And those men who undermine all undertakings by foolishly uttering in their insolence pernicious advice that only seems beneficial should, after careful examination, be excluded from discussions of policy. For in this world some counselors, acting in concert with cunning enemies, persuade their master to engage in self-destructive actions, thus bringing him to ruin. When it comes to evaluating counsel, a master must, through a full investigation, determine which of his ministers are, in fact, enemies who are posing as friends although they have actually been suborned. For his enemies find the weak points of a rash king who suddenly rushes into undertakings, just as birds plunge into the gap in the Krauñca mountain. And so a king who underestimates his enemy and fails to protect himself meets with calamities and falls from his lofty state.”

[21–26] But when ten-necked Rāvaṇa had heard Kumbhakarṇa’s speech, he knit his brows in anger and said this to him in a rage: “How dare you lecture me like some venerable elder or preceptor? Why waste your effort on words like this? You must do what suits the present situation. It is useless now to keep on repeating what I failed to do then, whether from error, mental confusion, or reliance on my strength and valor. If you truly love me, if you truly understand what it means to be a brother, or if you believe in your heart that this mission is of the utmost urgency, then you must immediately do what suits the present situation. Please remedy through your valor this catastrophic result of my unsound policy. A true friend is one who stands by a poor wretch who has lost everything. A true kinsman is one who renders assistance to those who have gone astray.”

[27–32] As Rāvaṇa was speaking these firm and harsh words in this fashion, Kumbhakarṇa, thinking, “He is angry!” addressed him softly and gently. Recognizing that his brother was extremely agitated, Kumbhakarṇa now spoke softly, soothing him: “Enough of this agonizing, foremost king of the *rākṣasas*! You must put aside your anger and regain your composure. You need not give way to despondency as long as I am alive, your majesty. I will destroy him on whose account you are so anguished. Regardless of

your mood, my bond of kinship and brotherly affection forced me to offer beneficial advice, your majesty. What is appropriate for a loving kinsman to do in the present circumstances is to slaughter your enemies. Now watch, as I do just that in battle.

[33–38] "This very day, great-armed warrior, you shall see the hosts of tawny monkeys fleeing, once I have slain Rāma and his brother in the forefront of battle. This very day, you shall be happy, great-armed warrior, while Sītā will be desolated upon seeing me bring Rāma's head back from the battle. This very day, all the *rākṣasas* in Laṅkā whose kinsmen have been slain shall witness the most welcome death of Rāma. This very day, through the destruction of the enemy in battle, I shall wipe away the tears of those afflicted with grief on account of the slaughter of their kinsmen. This very day, you shall see the lord of the leaping monkeys, Sugrīva—huge as a mountain—torn to pieces in battle, like a storm cloud when the sun breaks through. You should not send out anyone else to fight, warrior of unequaled valor. I myself will slaughter your enemies, mighty king.

[39–42] "I shall fight them, whether they be Śakra, Yama, Agni the purifier, Māruta, or even Varuṇa and Kubera. For even Indra himself, the smasher of citadels, would be terrified of me—with my sharp fangs and my body the size of a mountain—when I roar, holding aloft my keen lance. Or even were I to cast my weapon aside and swiftly trample our enemies, not one of them, if he valued his life, would be able to stand and face me. Not with a javelin, not with a mace, not with a sword, nor with keen arrows, but with my own two hands I shall, in my fury, slay even Indra himself, the wielder of the *vajra*.

[43–47] "Even should Rāghava withstand the impact of my fist this day, then a hail of arrows will drink his blood. Why are you oppressed by anxiety while I am here, your majesty? I stand poised to sally forth for the destruction of your foes. Give up this fear of Rāma, your majesty. I shall slay Rāghava in battle as well as Lakṣmaṇa and mighty Sugrīva. For I wish to confer upon you great and extraordinary renown. I am off to bring you pleasure, the greatest of all pleasures, through the slaughter of Dāśarathi. Once I have slain Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa, I shall devour all the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys. So enjoy yourself to your heart's content. Drink fine wines. Attend to your duties and banish all cares. Once I have,

this very day, sent Rāma to the abode of Yama, Sītā will at long last submit to your will.”

Sarga 52

[1–5] Now, when Mahodara had heard those words uttered by huge, powerful Kumbhakarṇa with his immense arms, he said this: “Although you were born in a noble family, Kumbhakarṇa, you are presumptuous and have a vulgar mind. You are arrogant and incapable of understanding what is to be done in any situation. It is not the case that the king does not understand sound and unsound policy, Kumbhakarṇa. But you, presumptuous in your childishness, just like to prattle. He is quite familiar with the distinctions of place and time; and he knows all about stasis, increase, and diminution of both himself and his enemies, bull among *rākṣasas*. For what wise man would engage in an action such as could only be performed by a vulgar-minded man of brute strength who does not honor his elders?

[6–10] “And as for righteousness, profit, and pleasure, which you claim can be practiced separately, you lack the capacity to understand them as they truly are. For action alone is the motivating force behind all things. And in this world, even the most wicked actions may bear excellent fruit. Righteousness and sound policy may yield excellent results, but so may their opposites. Still, unrighteousness and unsound policy may also yield results that are calamitous. Men engage in actions with reference to this world and the next. So a person who indulges in pleasure may still attain excellent consequences. The king set his heart on this deed, and we all approved it. And besides, what is wrong with the use of violence against an enemy?

[11–18] “Furthermore, as to your rationale for going forth to battle on your own, I shall explain to you why that is both inappropriate and harmful. How can you single-handedly defeat that very same Rāghava who earlier slaughtered so many immensely powerful *rākṣasas* in Janasthāna? You can see throughout the city all those mighty *rākṣasas* whom he earlier defeated in Janasthāna. They are still terrified to this day. In your ignorance you wish to rouse Daśaratha’s son Rāma, who is like a raging lion, as one might rouse a sleeping serpent. For who can possibly assail him who is as irresistible as death, unassailable in his wrath, and ever blazing with energy? Our whole army would be in danger if it faced this enemy.

Therefore, I do not approve of your going there alone. Who, moreover, lacking all resources, could hope, like some common fool, to subdue an enemy who possesses a wealth of resources and is determined to lay down his life? How, best of *rākṣasas*, can you possibly hope to fight someone who has no peer among men, but is equal to Indra or Vivasvant?”

[19–23] Having spoken in this fashion to the enraged Kumbhakarṇa, Mahodara then, in the midst of the *rākṣasas*, addressed Rāvaṇa, who makes the worlds cry out: “Since you already have Vaidehī, why do you go on talking? Sītā will submit to your wishes whenever you desire. I have devised a ruse whereby Sītā will come to you. If it appeals to your way of thinking, lord of the *rākṣasas*, then hear me out. Have it proclaimed that these five—Dvijihva, Saṃhrādin, Kumbhakarṇa, Vitardana, and I—are going forth to kill Rāma. Then we will go out and engage Rāma in fierce battle. If we should defeat your enemies, then we shall have no further need of such a ruse.

[24–27] “If, on the other hand, when we have finished the battle, our enemy should survive, then we shall adopt the ruse that I have devised in my mind. Our bodies rent by sharp arrows marked with Rāma’s name, we shall return from the battle, covered with blood. Announcing, ‘We have devoured Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa,’ we shall reverently clasp your feet. You must then reward us to our heart’s content. Then, your majesty, you must have the following proclaimed throughout the city from elephant-back: ‘Rāma has been slain along with his brother and his troops!’

[28–1138*–35] “Then, feigning the greatest delight, subduer of your foes, you must cause your attendants to be given delicacies, servants, various desirable things, and wealth. Also have your heroic warriors given garlands, garments, and unguents. Your soldiers should be given copious drink, and you yourself must drink, feigning delight. Once this vicious rumor [r]‘The *rākṣasas* have devoured Rāma along with his companions!’ has been heard and spread everywhere, you must go to Sītā privately and comfort her with consoling words. Then you should seduce her with wealth, grain, jewels, and various desirable things. By means of this deception, your majesty, which will give rise to fear and grief, Sītā, believing her husband dead, will come under your sway, unwilling though she may be. For once she grasps that her beloved husband is dead, she will come under your sway in her despair and feminine frailty. Previously she was raised in comfort,

and though that is what she deserves, she has been racked with suffering. Once she realizes that her comfort is dependent upon you, she will, by all means, come to you. In my view this is the best policy. It would be catastrophic for you to confront Rāma. Don’t be so anxious. If you remain here without fighting, you will surely gain great happiness. And so, conquering one’s enemies without a fight, without the loss of one’s army, and without placing oneself in danger, lord of the people, one can long enjoy fame, great merit, majesty, and glory, lord of the earth!”

Sarga 53

[1–8] When Kumbhakarṇa had been addressed in this fashion, he first reviled Mahodara and then addressed his brother Rāvaṇa, foremost of the *rākṣasas*: “In killing that evil-minded Rāma this very day, I shall remove a terrible danger to you. With your enemy out of the way, may you be content. True heroes do not boast in vain, like empty clouds thundering. Watch now as my boasts are proven true by my feats in battle. True heroes do not tolerate insult, nor do they indulge in self-praise. But without swaggering, they perform seemingly impossible feats. [s]It was through heeding the advice of cowards like you, Mahodara, ignorant fools, who think that they are wise, that the king has been brought to such a sorry state. It is people like you—cowards in battle and sycophants of the king, saying only what he wants to hear—that have constantly subverted this undertaking. Moreover, in counseling the king in the guise of friendship, you have acted, in fact, like an enemy. For Laṅkā has been virtually emptied save for the king, the treasury has been drained, and the army decimated. In order to remedy your unsound policy, I shall this very day go forth to war, fully prepared to defeat the enemy in battle.”

[9–11] When wise Kumbhakarṇa had spoken these words in this fashion, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, laughing, replied in these words: “There is no doubt that Mahodara is terrified of Rāma. That’s why the idea of battle does not appeal to him, dear boy so skillful in battle. I have no one who can equal you in loyalty and in strength. So go forth, Kumbhakarṇa, for the slaughter of our enemy and for victory!”

[12–15] That slayer of his enemies swiftly seized his sharp lance. It was made entirely of black iron, but it glittered with ornaments of burnished gold. The equal of Indra’s thunderbolt, it was fearsome and as heavy as the

vajra. It was a killer of gods, *dānavas*, *gandharvas*, *yakṣas*, and *kinnaras*. It was adorned with massive garlands of red blossoms and stained red with the blood of his enemies. It spewed forth its inner fire. Seizing that sharp lance, the immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa spoke these words to Rāvaṇa: "Let your vast army stay here. I shall go forth alone. This very day, in my rage and ravenous hunger, I shall devour the monkeys!"

[16–21] Upon hearing Kumbhakarṇa's speech, Rāvaṇa uttered these words: "You had best go forth accompanied by soldiers armed with lances and war hammers. For those great monkeys are swift and determined. They would surely kill you with their fangs should you be alone or caught off guard. Therefore, you had best go forth accompanied by unassailable soldiers. You must annihilate the entire enemy force, which is such a menace to the *rākṣasas*." Then, rising from his throne, immensely powerful Rāvaṇa bound upon Kumbhakarṇa's head a chaplet with a jewel at its center. And he fastened upon great Kumbhakarṇa armlets, rings, a necklace of pearls that shone like the hare-marked moon, and other fine ornaments. And Rāvaṇa hung upon him fragrant and celestial garlands of blossoms and placed magnificent earrings on his ears.

[22–26] Wearing his golden bracelets and armlets and adorned with golden necklaces and other ornaments, huge-eared Kumbhakarṇa resembled a fire blazing up with oblations. With his great black sword belt, he was as resplendent as Mount Mandara girded with the great serpent when the nectar of immortality was churned forth. Girding on his impenetrable golden armor, which could withstand any blow and, blazing with its own luster, glittered like lightning, he resembled the king of the mountains, shrouded in clouds at sunset. His body adorned with every ornament and, his lance in hand, the *rākṣasa* resembled Nārāyaṇa when he had resolved to take his three strides. He embraced his brother and reverently circumambulated him. Then, bowing his head to him, the immensely powerful warrior set forth. Rāvaṇa sent him off with auspicious blessings.

[27–32] Chariot-warriors accompanied that great hero, himself the foremost of chariot-warriors, to the blare of conches and the beating of war drums. They were accompanied in turn by well-armed soldiers, elephants, horses, and chariots that rumbled like storm clouds. They followed the fearsome and immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa on serpents, camels, donkeys, horses, lions, elephants, and various other beasts and birds. Strewn

with showers of blossoms, a parasol held above him, and his sharp lance in hand, that foe of gods and *dānavas* went forth, intoxicated with strong drink and frenzied with the smell of blood. Behind him, making a huge uproar, came many fearsome and immensely powerful *rākṣasa* foot soldiers. They had fearsome eyes and held weapons in their hands. With their red eyes and their huge bodies, they looked like masses of black collyrium. They brandished lances, swords, keen battle-axes, iron clubs many fathoms long, maces, cudgels, huge trunks of *tāla* trees, and slings that were not to be withstood.

[33–38] Then, taking on a different form—horrific and hair-raising—the highly energetic and immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa marched forth. He was now a hundred bow lengths wide and six hundred tall. Terrifying, his eyes as big as cartwheels, he looked like a huge mountain. Resembling a scorched mountain, the huge Kumbhakarṇa, with his enormous mouth, arranged the *rākṣasas* in battle order. Then, laughing, he said this: "This very day, in my wrath, I shall burn up the troops of the monkey leaders, one after another, just as a fire would so many moths. Granted, these forest-ranging monkeys have done me no harm. In fact, their kind is an ornament to the city parks of folks like us. However, it is Rāghava, along with Lakṣmaṇa, who is the root cause of the blockade of our city. Once he is killed, all of them will be destroyed, and I am going to kill him in battle."

[39–45] As Kumbhakarṇa was speaking in this fashion, the *rākṣasas* sent up an extremely dreadful roar that seemed to make the very ocean tremble. But as wise Kumbhakarṇa marched swiftly forth, dreadful omens appeared on every side. Extremely dreadful clouds thundered, shedding meteors and lightning bolts, while the earth, together with its seas and forests, trembled. Dreadful-looking jackals howled, their mouths emitting flames, while sky-going birds wheeled in clockwise circles. As he marched along the road, a vulture perched upon his lance. His left eye throbbed and his left arm trembled. A blazing meteor crashed down with a horrific sound. The sun grew dim, and an ill wind began to blow. But driven by the power of fate, Kumbhakarṇa marched on, heedless of the great and hair-raising portents that had appeared.

[46–50] Stepping over the ramparts, that hero, who resembled a mountain, gazed upon the extraordinary monkey army, which looked like a mass of clouds. And like clouds driven by the wind, the monkeys fled in all

directions when they saw the foremost of the *rākṣasas*, who looked like a mountain. Seeing that immensely fierce monkey army fleeing in all directions, like a scattered mass of clouds, Kumbhakarṇa, who resembled a cloud, in his joy roared thunderously like a cloud. Upon hearing his dreadful roaring, which was like the rumbling of a rain-charged cloud in the sky, many of the leaping monkeys fell to the ground, like *sāla* trees cut off at the roots. Great Kumbhakarṇa marched forth wielding a huge iron club for the destruction of his enemies. He looked like Lord Yama, with his servants and his rod, at the end of a cosmic era. Thus, he inspired a paralyzing fear in the ranks of the monkeys.

Sarga 54

[1–6] Kumbhakarṇa let loose a mighty roar that caused the ocean to resound, producing, as it were, thunderclaps and shattering, so it seemed, the very mountains. When the monkeys saw him approaching, with his terrible eyes—he whom not even munificent Indra, Yama, or Varuṇa could kill—they scattered. Seeing them scatter, Añgada, Vālin's son, addressed Nala, Nīla, Gavākṣa, and the immensely powerful Kumuda: "Where are you going in such an access of panic, like vulgar tawny monkeys, forgetting who you are, your heroic deeds, and your noble lineage? Enough of this, gentle friends! Turn back! Why are you trying to save yourselves? This is no *rākṣasa* capable of fighting. It is just some huge scarecrow. With our valor we shall smash this huge scarecrow towering amid the *rākṣasas*. Turn back, leaping monkeys!"

[7–10] When the tawny monkeys, with some difficulty, had been reassured, they regrouped here and there. Then, with trees and boulders in hand, they advanced toward the battlefield. Turning back in a rage, the immensely powerful forest-dwelling monkeys, like wildly enraged bull elephants in rut, struck Kumbhakarṇa with lofty mountain peaks and boulders. Although he was struck with trees, their branches in blossom, he was not shaken. Falling on his limbs, the boulders shattered into hundreds of pieces, while the trees, their branches in blossom, fell to the ground, splintered. In a towering rage, he exerted himself mightily and wrought havoc upon the armies of the immensely powerful monkeys, just as a fire that has flared up might wreak havoc in a forest.

[11–15] Hurled down, many of the bulls among monkeys lay there, drenched with blood, like crimson-blossomed trees that have fallen. Leaping and running, the monkeys did not watch where they were going. Some fell into the sea, while others took to the sky. As they were being slaughtered by the immensely powerful *rākṣasa*, those heroes fled along the same path by which they had crossed the ocean. Some, their faces dejected through fear, fled down to the shore. Some apes climbed trees, while others fled to the mountain. Some of them plunged into the sea, while others took refuge in caves. Some of the leaping monkeys sank down; none of them stood their ground.

[16–24] Seeing that the monkeys had broken ranks, Aṅgada said this: "Turn back, leaping monkeys! Stand fast! Let us fight! If you break ranks, I can see no safe place for you, even should you circle the earth itself. Turn back, all of you! Why are you trying to save yourselves? Nothing can hinder your progress and your valor. But if you flee weaponless, your wives will mock you. But though you will have survived, that will be like death to you. Surely you were all born in long and great lineages. If, abandoning your valor, you flee in fear, you will certainly become contemptible. Where have they gone now, your great and lofty boasts that we heard before in the public assembly? When someone survives but is subject to censure, tales of his cowardice are bandied about. So follow the path that is fit for honorable men; abandon your fear. If, our life spans being short, we should lie slain upon the earth, then, since we would have died in battle, we would attain the Brahmaloka, so difficult to reach. But if we should slay the enemy in battle, we would attain glory. In any case, once Kumbhakarṇa sees Kākutstha, he will no more escape with his life than would a moth that flies into a blazing fire. If we who are so renowned should save our lives by fleeing, our reputations would be destroyed, since we, who are so many, would have been routed by a single warrior."

[25–29] As heroic Aṅgada of the golden armlets was speaking in this fashion, the monkeys, still fleeing, responded to him in words that are to be condemned by the brave: "The *rākṣasa* Kumbhakarṇa has wrought terrible slaughter among us. This is no time to stand our ground. We value our lives; so we're getting out of here." Having said this much, all the leaders of the monkey troops, keeping their eyes on the advancing *rākṣasa*, so terrible with his terrible eyes, fled in all directions. But with soothing and respectful

words, Añgada managed to get those heroic, wrinkle-faced monkeys to turn back, even as they fled. Then Ṛṣabha, Śarabha, Mainda, Dhūmra, Nīla, Kumuda, Suṣeṇa, Gavākṣa, Rambha, and Tāra, led by Dvivida, Panasa, and Hanumān, the son of Vāyu, swiftly turned and headed back to the battlefield.

Sarga 55

[1–4] And so, when those gigantic monkeys had heard Añgada's words, they turned back, eager for battle, resigning themselves to death. At the words of Añgada, the wrinkle-faced monkeys were calmed, infused with courage, and incited to valor. Then, marching forward in great excitement and resigned to death, the monkeys fought furiously, heedless of their lives. Holding aloft trees and huge mountain peaks, those gigantic monkeys charged swiftly at Kumbhakarṇa.

[5–7] But the valiant and colossal Kumbhakarṇa raised his mace and, in a towering rage, struck at his enemies, sending them flying in all directions. Struck down by Kumbhakarṇa, the monkeys lay sprawled on the ground in groups of seven and eight hundred, and even in groups of thousands. He raced about sweeping up groups of monkeys—sixteen, eight, ten, twenty, and thirty at a time—in his two arms and devouring them, just as Garuḍa, in his towering rage, devours the great serpents.

[8–13] Hovering in the sky, Hanumān rained down mountain peaks and many different kinds of trees on Kumbhakarṇa's head. But with his lance, mighty Kumbhakarṇa shattered the mountain peaks and deflected the cascade of trees. Then, grasping his keen lance, he raced toward the fearsome army of tawny monkeys. But Hanumān, seizing a mountain, stood directly in the path of the charging Kumbhakarṇa. With it, the enraged monkey forcefully struck Kumbhakarṇa, whose body was as fearsome as a great mountain. Overwhelmed by that blow, the blood-splattered *rākṣasa* staggered, his limbs moistened with fat. Brandishing his lance, which glittered like lightning and resembled a mountain, its highest peak in flames, he struck Māruti full in the chest, just as Guha struck Mount Krauñca with his fearsome javelin. His mighty chest pierced by the lance, Hanumān was dazed and vomited blood from his mouth. There, in that great battle, he loosed a horrendous cry that was like the thundering of the clouds at the end of a cosmic era.

[14–18] Then the *rākṣasa* hosts, seeing him afflicted, were suddenly delighted and sent up a cheer. But the leaping monkeys themselves were afflicted, and, overwhelmed with fear of Kumbhakarṇa, they fled in the midst of battle. Nīla then hurled a mountaintop at wise Kumbhakarṇa; but the latter, seeing it rushing toward him, struck it with his fist. Struck by his fist, the mountaintop shattered and fell to the earth, shooting forth sparks and flames. Then five tigers among monkeys—Ṛṣabha, Śarabha, Nīla, Gavākṣa, and Gandhamādana—rushed Kumbhakarṇa. Those immensely powerful monkeys battered gigantic Kumbhakarṇa on all sides with mountains and trees and with their palms, feet, and fists.

[19–22] But those blows felt like mere caresses to him, and he was not shaken in the least. He crushed swift Ṛṣabha with both arms. Crushed in Kumbhakarṇa's arms, the fearsome Ṛṣabha, bull among monkeys, collapsed, blood oozing from his mouth. Then, in battle, Kumbhakarṇa, Indra's foe, struck Śarabha with his fist, Nīla with his knee, and Gavākṣa with the palm of his hand. Shaken by the blows they had been dealt, dazed, and spattered with blood, they fell to the ground, like *kiṃśuka* trees that have been cut down.

[23–26] When those great monkey leaders had fallen, thousands of monkeys rushed Kumbhakarṇa. And all those mighty bulls among leaping monkeys, who resembled mountains, began to bite him as they jumped and climbed up upon him, as if he were a mountain. Those bulls among leaping monkeys struck at the gigantic Kumbhakarṇa with their claws, fangs, fists, and knees. Covered with those thousands of monkeys, that tiger among *rākṣasas*, who already resembled a mountain, now looked like one overgrown with trees.

[27–32] Then the mighty *rākṣasa* seized all those monkeys in his arms and devoured them, just as Garuḍa, in his rage, devours the great serpents. Kumbhakarṇa crammed the monkeys into his mouth—as wide as the underworld Pātāla—until they came out of his nose and ears. As he furiously devoured those tawny monkeys in his towering rage, the best of *rākṣasas*, who looked like a mountain, routed the entire monkey host. Drenching the earth with blood and flesh, the frenzied *rākṣasa* rampaged through the ranks of the tawny monkeys like the fire of universal destruction. In that battle, with his lance in hand, powerful Kumbhakarṇa resembled Śakra, *vajra* in hand, or Yama, ender of all things, with his noose

in hand. Kumbhakarṇa raged through the monkey ranks like Agni, the purifier, blazing through the dry woodlands in the summer.

[33–37] Then, their troops decimated and their leaders slain, the monkeys, trembling with fear, cried out loudly and discordantly as they were slaughtered. With so many of them being slaughtered by Kumbhakarṇa, the monkeys fled to Rāghava for refuge, shaken and despairing. But the heroic lord of the monkeys, Sugrīva, seeing mighty Kumbhakarṇa rushing toward him, sprang up. The great monkey tore off a mountain peak and, brandishing it, charged swiftly at mighty Kumbhakarṇa. When Kumbhakarṇa, his every limb unscathed, saw that leaping monkey rushing toward him, he stopped and faced the monkey lord.

[38–40] Seeing Kumbhakarṇa standing there devouring huge monkeys, his body smeared with their blood, Sugrīva said these words: "You have struck down heroes; you have performed an impossibly difficult feat. You have devoured our troops and have gained the highest renown. But you should leave the monkey army alone. What have you to do with common soldiers? Now try to withstand a single blow of this mountain of mine, *rākṣasa*."

[41–45] When the tiger among *rākṣasas*, Kumbhakarṇa, had heard that speech of the king of the tawny monkeys—a speech that showed his strength and fortitude—he uttered these words: "You are the grandson of Prajāpati, lord of creatures, and the son of Ṛkṣarajas, and you are endowed with learning and valor. That is why you boast so, monkey." When Sugrīva had heard these words of Kumbhakarṇa, he hefted the mountain and hurled it violently. He struck Kumbhakarṇa in the chest with that mountain, which was like Indra's *vajra* or a thunderbolt. But the mountain peak shattered violently against his broad chest. At that, the leaping monkeys immediately grew despondent, while the hosts of *rākṣasas* roared with delight. Kumbhakarṇa was furious at being struck by that mountain peak. He opened his mouth and bellowed with rage. Hefting his lance, which glittered like lightning, he hurled it in order to kill the lord of the apes and tawny monkeys.

[46–49] But Hanumān, son of Anila, swiftly leaping up, caught in both hands the sharp gold-corded lance hurled by Kumbhakarṇa's arm and quickly broke it. Placing that immense lance, made of black iron and weighing many tons, across his knee, that bull among leaping monkeys

snapped it in great excitement. When the great *rākṣasa* lord saw that his lance was broken, he was enraged. Tearing off the summit of Laṅkā's Mount Malaya, he closed with Sugrīva and struck him with it. Struck with that mountain peak in battle, the lord of the monkeys fell senseless to the ground. Seeing him fallen senseless to the ground in battle, the *yātudhānas* roared in delight.

[50–53] Then Kumbhakarṇa rushed upon the lord of the monkeys, whose valor was fierce and wondrous. Seizing Sugrīva, he carried him off, as a violent wind might a cloud. Moving through the battle, holding aloft Sugrīva, who resembled a huge cloud, Kumbhakarṇa, whose form rivaled that of Mount Meru, now resembled Mount Meru with a new, fearsome peak soaring above it. The hero Kumbhakarṇa, holding Sugrīva aloft, proceeded on his way, as the *rākṣasa* lords sang his praises in the battle. He heard the cries of those who dwelt in heaven, home of the thirty gods, who were astonished at the capture of the king of the leaping monkeys. Then, as Indra's foe, whose valor was that of Indra, was carrying off the lord of the tawny monkeys, the equal of Indra himself, he reflected, "With this one out of the way, the entire army, Rāghava included, is as good as gone."

[54–63] When wise Hanumān, son of Māruta, saw that the monkey army had fled in all directions and that the monkey Sugrīva had been taken by Kumbhakarṇa, he reflected: "What am I to do now that Sugrīva has been captured in this way? By all means, I shall do what is proper for me to do. I shall become like a mountain and crush the *rākṣasa*. Once I have slain mighty Kumbhakarṇa in battle, smashing his body with my fists, and freed the king of the monkeys, all the leaping monkeys shall rejoice. On the other hand, the king will surely free himself as he would even were he to be captured by the thirty gods together with the *asuras* and great serpents. I believe that because he was struck down in battle by Kumbhakarṇa with the blow of a mountain, the lord of the monkeys must not yet have regained consciousness. After a while, when he has regained consciousness, he will do what is best for himself and the monkeys in this great battle. On the other hand, if I were to free great Sugrīva, it would incur his most severe displeasure, as his reputation would be forever tarnished. Therefore, I shall wait awhile until our king's valor is recouped. Meanwhile, I shall rally the scattered army of the monkeys." After reflecting in this fashion, Hanumān, son of Māruta, once more halted the flight of the vast monkey army.

[64–70] Meanwhile, Kumbhakarṇa entered Lañkā carrying the huge tawny monkey, who was still twitching. As he did so, he was strewn with showers of splendid blossoms by those standing on the palaces and at the gates of the buildings on the main thoroughfares. Then, still held in the arms of the much stronger *rākṣasa*, the great monkey somehow regained consciousness. Gazing about him again and again at the city's royal highway, he fell to thinking: [t]"Since I have been captured in this fashion, how in the world can I now strike back? I must perform such a feat as will be both desirable and beneficial for the tawny monkeys." Suddenly grasping the foe of Indra, lord of the immortal gods, with his fingertips, the king of the tawny monkeys rent his ears with his claws and his nose with his fangs. Then he slashed Kumbhakarṇa along his flanks. Bruised and wounded by him, robbed of his ears and nose, his body drenched in blood, Kumbhakarṇa was in a towering rage. Flinging Sugrīva off, he smashed him to the ground. Smashed to the ground with terrible force and beaten all the while by those foes of the gods, the *rākṣasas*, Sugrīva, jumping up, flew swiftly into the sky and once more joined Rāma. Stripped of his ears and nose and gushing blood, mighty Kumbhakarṇa looked like a mountain covered with waterfalls.

[71–76] Then the great *rākṣasa* Kumbhakarṇa, rushing swiftly from the city, began to devour that fierce monkey army, as the blazing fire at the end of a cosmic era devours all creatures. Ravenous and craving blood and flesh, Kumbhakarṇa plunged into the fierce monkey army and, in his madness, began to devour *rākṣasas*, tawny monkeys, *piśācas*, and apes in battle. With one hand he seized monkeys in his rage—one, two, three, or more—and swiftly hurled them into his mouth, together with *rākṣasas*. Streaming with blood and fat and pounded with the peaks of lordly mountains, the mighty *rākṣasa* devoured the monkeys. As they were being devoured, the tawny monkeys ran to Rāma for shelter. At that moment, Sumitrā's son Lakṣmaṇa, destroyer of enemy armies and conqueror of enemy citadels, entered the fight in a rage. Valiant Lakṣmaṇa sunk seven arrows into Kumbhakarṇa's body. Then he took up some more and let them fly.

[77–83] But mighty Kumbhakarṇa bypassed Saumitri and raced directly toward Rāma, seeming as he did so to tear up the very earth. Then Rāma Dāśarathi, invoking the divine weapon-spell of Rudra, loosed sharp arrows

at Kumbhakarṇa's breast. As he ran about violently in a rage, wounded by Rāma, flames mixed with blazing coals poured from his mouth. As those arrows, fletched with peacock feathers, sank into his chest, his massive mace slipped from his hand and fell to the ground. When the immensely powerful *rākṣasa* realized that he had no weapons left, he wrought tremendous slaughter with his fists and his feet. Drenched with blood, his body pierced all over with arrows, he poured forth blood, as a mountain does its waterfalls. Suffused with fierce rage and covered with blood, he raced about devouring monkeys, *rākṣasas*, and apes.

[84–89] At this point, righteous Lakṣmaṇa, who was intent upon killing Kumbhakarṇa and who had been weighing many methods of doing so, spoke to Rāma: "He cannot distinguish between monkeys and *rākṣasas*. Intoxicated with the smell of blood, he is devouring his allies and his enemies alike. Very well, let the bulls among monkeys swarm all over him so that the principal troop leaders may take their stand all around him. Then, after some time, that evil-minded *rākṣasa*, falling to the ground, crushed by that heavy burden, will not kill any more of the leaping monkeys." When the leaping monkeys had heard those words of the wise prince, they swarmed upon Kumbhakarṇa in great excitement. But Kumbhakarṇa was enraged at being swarmed all over by the leaping monkeys, and he shook them off violently, as a vicious elephant might riders mounted on his back.

[90–96] Seeing them shaken off, Rāma, thinking, "This *rākṣasa* is infuriated," took up his splendid bow and sprang toward him. Rāma, his splendid quiver of arrows fastened on him, took up his fearsome, tautly strung bow, variegated with burnished gold and resembling a serpent. He sprang forward, rallying the tawny monkeys. Accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa and surrounded by the monkey troops, invincible and mighty Rāma continued to advance. He gazed upon great and mighty Kumbhakarṇa, the diademed tamer of his foes, whose every limb was drenched with blood. Rushing upon them all in a mad fury, that *rākṣasa* was like one of the great elephants that support the earth. Furious and surrounded by *rākṣasas*, he was hunting down the tawny monkeys. Adorned with golden armlets, he resembled the Vindhya mountain or Mount Mandara. He spewed blood from his mouth, like a towering storm cloud pouring rain. Drenched with

blood, he lapped it up with his tongue. Crushing the monkey hosts, he resembled Yama or Kāla, the ender of all things.

[97–100] As he gazed upon that foremost of the *rākṣasas*, whose splendor was that of a blazing fire, the bull among men twanged his bowstring. Enraged at the sound of his bow and unable to endure it, that bull among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, charged at Rāghava. Then, as the mountainous Kumbhakarṇa, his arms like the splendid coils of the king of great serpents, rushed toward him in battle, like a storm cloud driven by the wind, Rāma addressed him: "Don't lose heart now, lord of the *rākṣasas*! Know, foe of Śakra, that it is I, Rāma, who stand before you, wielding my bow. You are about to die."

[101–106] When Kumbhakarṇa realized, "It's Rāma!" he laughed with a hideous sound that caused the hearts of all the forest-dwelling monkeys to sink. With a fearsome and hideous laugh that was like the thundering of storm clouds, immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa said these words to Rāghava: "You should know that I am no Virādha, Kabandha, Khara, Vālin, or Mārīca. It is I, Kumbhakarṇa, who have come. Gaze upon my huge and fearsome war hammer, all made of black iron. In the past, I defeated the gods and *dānavas* with it. Nor should you treat me contemptuously, thinking, 'He has lost his ears and nose!' For the loss of my ears and nose causes me not the slightest discomfort. Now, tiger among the Ikṣvākus, you should demonstrate your puny strength against my limbs. Then, once I have witnessed your manliness and valor, I will devour you."

[107–110] Upon hearing these words of Kumbhakarṇa, Rāma let fly beautifully fletched arrows. Though they struck him with the impact of a thunderbolt, that enemy of the gods was neither shaken nor harmed. Those same arrows—like thunderbolts—that had pierced the great *sāla* trees and slain Vālin, bull among monkeys, could not wound Kumbhakarṇa's body. That foe of great Indra, however, absorbed those arrows with his body, as one might drink a trickle of water. For in whirling his war hammer with its fierce impact, he had blunted the impact of Rāma's arrows. Then, covered with blood, the *rākṣasa*, a terror to the vast hosts of the gods, whirling his war hammer with its fierce impact, put the army of tawny monkeys to flight.

[111–119] Then, taking up the excellent divine weapon-spell of Vāyu, Rāma loosed it at that night-roaming *rākṣasa* and, with it, took off his arm

that held the war hammer. His arm severed, Kumbhakarṇa roared deafeningly. Severed by Rāghava's arrow, that arm of his, which was like a mountain peak and was still holding the war hammer, fell upon the army of the king of the tawny monkeys, wreaking carnage among the monkey troops. The monkeys who had survived that carnage were routed and fled in despair to the edge of the battlefield. From there, their bodies trembling, they watched the fearsome duel between the *rākṣasa* lord and the lord of men. His arm severed by the divine weapon, Kumbhakarṇa tore up a tree with his hand and rushed in battle at the lord of men, like some huge and lordly mountain whose peak had been severed. But with an arrow variegated with *jāmbūnada* gold and charged with the divine weapon-spell of Indra, Rāma cut off Kumbhakarṇa's upraised arm, which resembled the coils of a great serpent and held the *sāla* tree. Kumbhakarṇa's severed arm, resembling a mountain, fell to the ground, where, thrashing about, it crushed trees, mountains, rocks, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*. Seeing Kumbhakarṇa, his arms severed, rushing suddenly upon him and roaring, Rāma took up two sharp half-moon-headed arrows and, with them, cut off the *rākṣasa*'s feet in battle. His arms and feet severed, Kumbhakarṇa opened wide his mouth, which was like the mare's head fire that lies beneath the sea. Bellowing, he hurled himself suddenly upon Rāma, like Rāhu, demon of the eclipse, upon the moon in the heavens. But Rāma filled Kumbhakarṇa's mouth with sharp arrows, their fletching bound with gold. His mouth full, Kumbhakarṇa was unable to speak. With great effort, he moaned and lost consciousness.

[120–123] Then Rāma took up the arrow of Indra, sharp, beautifully fletched and perfect. It shone like the rays of the sun. It had the speed of Māruta, and it resembled the staff of Brahmā or Kāla, the ender of all things. Its fletching was gorgeous with diamonds and *jāmbūnada* gold, and it shone like the blazing sun or fire. It had the striking power of great Indra's *vajra* or a thunderbolt; and Rāma loosed it at the night-roaming *rākṣasa*. Set in motion by Rāghava's arm, the arrow sped on its way, lighting up the ten directions with its inherent splendor. Its appearance was as brilliant as that of Agni Vaiśvānara, undimmed by smoke, and its power was equal to that of mighty Śakra's thunderbolt. With it, Rāma severed the *rākṣasa* lord's head—huge as a mountain peak, its fangs bared, and its

gorgeous earrings swinging wildly—just as, long ago, Indra, smasher of citadels, severed the head of Vṛtra.

[124–129] Struck off by Rāma's arrow, the *rākṣasa*'s head, which resembled a mountain, fell. It smashed the gates of the buildings on the main thoroughfares and knocked down the lofty rampart. Finally, the enormous *rākṣasa*, who looked like Himalaya, fell into the sea, abode of waters. There he crushed crocodiles, shoals of huge fish, and serpents before he entered the earth. When Kumbhakarṇa, that mighty foe of brahmans and gods, was slain in battle, the earth shook and all the mountains trembled, while the gods in delight raised a tumultuous cheer. The divine seers, great seers, great serpents, gods, the spirits of the departed, the great birds, and *guhyakas*, together with the hosts of *yakṣas* and *gandharvas*, hovering in the sky, were delighted by Rāma's valor. Those countless monkeys, their faces like blooming lotuses, were overjoyed, and they paid honor to Rāghava, who had achieved his objective in having slain an unassailable enemy of such fearsome power. Once Bharata's older brother had slain in combat Kumbhakarṇa, crusher of the hosts of the gods, whose efforts had never before been thwarted in great battles, he rejoiced, as did Indra, the lord of the immortal gods, when he had slain the great *asura* Vṛtra.

Sarga 56

[1–4] When the *rākṣasas* saw that Kumbhakarṇa had been slain by great Rāghava, they reported it to Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*. Upon hearing that the immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa had been slain in battle, Rāvaṇa was stricken with grief. He lost consciousness and collapsed. Hearing that their paternal uncle had been slain, Devāntaka, Narāntaka, Triśiras, and Atikāya were stricken with grief and wept. When Mahodara and Mahāpārśva heard that their brother had been slain by Rāma, tireless in action, they were overwhelmed with grief.

[5–11] Then Rāvaṇa, bull among *rākṣasas*, regained consciousness with difficulty. Despondent at the slaying of Kumbhakarṇa, he began to lament: "Alas, Kumbhakarṇa, mighty and valorous crusher of your enemies' pride! After single-handedly scorching the army of our foe, where have you gone, abandoning me? Now I am truly lost, since my right arm, relying on which I feared neither the gods nor the *asuras*, has now fallen. How could such a

hero, a crusher of the pride of the gods and *dānavas*, who was like the fire of universal destruction, have been slain today in battle by Rāghava? How can it be that you, whom the blow of even Indra's *vajra* could never harm, now sleep on the ground, mangled by Rāma's arrows? Seeing you struck down in battle, the hosts of gods, hovering in the sky together with the seers, are shouting in delight. Undoubtedly, the leaping monkeys, in their excitement, will seize the opportunity and scale the unbreachable gates of Lañkā from every side.

[12–19] "I have no further use for kingship, and what good is Sītā to me now? Without Kumbhakarṇa, I can take no pleasure in life. If I should fail to kill in battle Rāghava, my brother's killer, then surely death would be better for me than this pointless existence. I shall go this very day to the place where my younger brother has gone. For I cannot bear to live a single moment without my brothers. The gods will surely laugh when they see me, who have done them great injury. But how, Kumbhakarṇa, shall I vanquish Indra now that you have been slain? This has befallen me, because, in my folly, I failed to heed the beneficial advice of great Vibhīṣaṇa. Since Kumbhakarṇa and Prahasta suffered such cruel deaths, the words of Vibhīṣaṇa have put me to shame. Now I have experienced the grievous fruit of my action in that I drove out majestic and righteous Vibhīṣaṇa." Thus, piteously lamenting for Kumbhakarṇa in many ways, ten-faced Rāvaṇa was shaken to his innermost core. Realizing that his younger brother, the foe of Indra, had been slain, he collapsed in profound distress.

Sarga 57

[1–7] After listening to the lamentations of evil-minded Rāvaṇa, who was lamenting in his burning grief, Triśiras spoke these words: "True enough, our dear and immensely valorous uncle, middlemost among you three brothers, has been slain. Nonetheless, your majesty, true men do not lament as you have done. Surely you are a match for all the three worlds, lord. Why then do you feel sorry for yourself in this fashion, like some ordinary person? Brahmā has given you a javelin, armor, a bow and arrow, and a chariot rumbling like a thundercloud and yoked to a thousand donkeys. Time and again, even when unarmed, you have slain the gods and the *dānavas*. Now, equipped with all your weapons, you must slay Rāghava. Or rather remain here, great king. I myself shall go forth to battle. I shall

exterminate your enemies, just as does Garuḍa the great serpents. Struck down by me this very day in battle, Rāma shall be laid low, just as was Śambara by Indra, king of the gods, and Naraka by Viṣṇu."

[8–13] When Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, had heard those words of Triśiras, he felt—impelled as he was by his own impending doom—that he had obtained a new lease on life. And when Devāntaka, Narāntaka, and powerful Atikāya had heard the words of Triśiras, they were filled with eagerness for battle. Then those heroic sons of Rāvaṇa, bulls among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, equal in valor to mighty Śakra himself, cried out, "I'll go! I'll go!" All of them could fly through the air. All of them were skilled in the power of illusion. All of them had crushed the pride of the thirty gods. All of them were ferocious in battle. All were provided with troops and divine weapons. All had gained wide renown. None had ever been known to suffer defeat in battle. All those heroes were expert in the use of divine weapon-spells. All were adept in combat. All were endowed with higher knowledge. All had obtained boons.

[14–17] Surrounded by his sons, whose brilliance equaled that of the sun, bringer of light, and who had crushed the strength of their enemies, the king resembled munificent Indra surrounded by the immortal gods, destroyers of the pride of the great *dānavas*. He embraced his sons and adorned them with ornaments. Then, invoking the highest blessings, he sent them off to battle. Rāvaṇa also dispatched his two brothers Mahodara and Mahāpārśva to guard the princes in battle. Taking respectful leave of great Rāvaṇa, who made his foes cry out, and reverently circling him, those gigantic warriors set forth.

[18–23] Those six immensely powerful and prominent *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, anointed themselves with all protective herbs and fragrances and then set forth, eager for battle. Mahodara mounted an elephant named Sudarśana, born in the lineage of Airāvata and resembling a black storm cloud. Mounted upon that elephant, which was equipped with every weapon and adorned with quivers, he was as splendid as Sūrya, impeller of all creatures, perched on the summit of the western mountain. Triśiras, Rāvaṇa's son, mounted a splendid chariot, which was yoked to magnificent horses and laden with every sort of weapon. Mounted in his chariot, bow in hand, Triśiras was as resplendent as a storm cloud charged with lightning and meteors, flashing fire, and traversed by a rainbow. Mounted on that

splendid chariot, Triśiras, with his three diadems, was as splendid as Himalaya, lord of mountains, with his three golden peaks.

[24–27] Next, Atikāya, foremost of all bowmen and a powerful son of the *rākṣasa* lord, mounted his splendid chariot. It had a magnificent axle and wheels and was splendidly yoked. It had a fine frame and yoke pole. It glittered with quivers and bows, and it was laden with darts, swords, and iron clubs. With his glittering diadem, variegated with gold, and his ornaments, Atikāya was as resplendent as Mount Meru illuminated by the rays of the shining sun. Standing in that chariot, surrounded by those tigers among the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, the mighty son of the king was as resplendent as Indra, *vajra* in hand, surrounded by the immortal gods.

[28–31] Narāntaka then mounted a huge white horse. Swift as thought and adorned with gold, it resembled Uccaiḥśravas himself. Taking up a dart that was like a meteor, Narāntaka was as resplendent as powerful Guha when he has taken up his javelin amid his enemies in battle. Taking up an iron club studded with diamonds, Devāntaka looked like the very image of Viṣṇu when he had seized the mountain with both arms. Taking up his mace, powerful and heroic Mahāpārśva resembled Kubera himself in battle, mace in hand.

[32–39] As they set forth surrounded by incomparable troops, those great warriors were like the gods in Amarāvatī, surrounded by incomparable troops. They were followed by great *rākṣasas* with splendid weapons, mounted on elephants and horses and riding on chariots that rumbled like storm clouds. Endowed with splendor, those great princes, diademed and radiant as the sun, looked like blazing planets in the sky. The white row of parasols held above them, resembling a bank of autumnal clouds, looked like a line of *haṃsas* in the sky. Eager for battle, the heroes marched forth, grimly resolved, for they had determined either to conquer their enemies or die. As those great warriors, ferocious in battle, marched forth, they bellowed, roared, and loosed arrows in their frenzy. The earth itself seemed to shake from the sounds of their roaring and the slapping of their arms, while the lion roars of the *rākṣasas* seemed almost to shatter the sky. As they marched forth, in great delight, the mighty *rākṣasa* lords spied the monkey army with its upraised boulders and trees.

[40–45] The great tawny monkeys too spied the army of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos. It was crowded with elephants, horses, and chariots, and it

resounded with the jingling of hundreds of little bells. It looked like a black storm cloud, and it bristled with huge weapons. It was filled on every side with *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, resplendent as blazing fires or the sun. Watching the approaching army, the leaping monkeys, perceiving their opportunity, raised huge mountains and roared again and again. Hearing the resounding cries of the leaders of the monkey troops, the mighty hosts of *rākṣasas*, unable to endure the fierce enthusiasm of their enemies, roared more frightfully still. As they plunged into the fearsome *rākṣasa* army, the troop leaders of the tawny monkeys, resembling mountains with lofty summits, stormed about with upraised boulders. Armed with trees and boulders, the leaping monkeys stormed through the *rākṣasa* troops in a rage, some leaping into the air, others remaining on the ground.

[46–51] Then, though they were kept at bay by torrents of arrows, the tawny monkeys, fearsome in their valor, unleashed a stupendous hail of trees, rocks, and mountains. Both the *rākṣasas* and the monkeys uttered leonine roars in the battle. And the leaping monkeys crushed the *yātudhānas* with boulders. In a rage, some of the leaping monkeys slew in battle heroes, clad in armor and adornments and mounted on chariots, elephants, and horses, while others, leaping up violently, slaughtered the *yātudhānas*. Those bulls among *rākṣasas*, their eyes knocked out by fists and falling mountain peaks, fled, fell, and shrieked. In a short while, the ground was covered with boulders and swords dropped by the tawny monkeys and *rākṣasas*, and it was drenched with blood. Crushers of their foes, the *rākṣasas*, who looked like shattered mountains, hurled their broken lances; but these were repulsed by the monkeys.

[52–59] Night-roaming *rākṣasas* slaughtered monkeys with monkeys, while monkeys slaughtered *rākṣasas* with *rākṣasas*. Snatching away the tawny monkeys' boulders, the *rākṣasas* slaughtered them, while the monkeys, stripping away the *rākṣasas*' weapons, slaughtered them. Smashing one another with boulders, lances, and missiles, the monkeys and *rākṣasas* roared like lions in battle as they slaughtered one another. Struck down by the monkeys, their mail and armor pierced, the *rākṣasas* oozed blood, as trees do their vital sap. In that battle, some of the monkeys smashed chariot with chariot, elephant with elephant, and horse with horse. But the *rākṣasas* cut down the trees and boulders of the monkey lords with sharp arrows—horseshoe-headed, half-moon-headed, and crescent-headed.

With the monkeys and *rākṣasas* slain in battle, and with all the shattered mountaintops and splintered trees, the ground became impassable. When the wrinkle-faced monkeys showed their excitement in that tumultuous battle and the *rākṣasas* were being struck down, the great seers and the hosts of gods cheered.

[60–66] But then Narāntaka, mounting a horse as swift as Māruta, and seizing a sharp javelin, plunged into the army of the monkey king, as might a fish into the vast ocean. That hero pierced seven hundred monkeys with his glittering dart. In an instant, that great foe of Indra single-handedly decimated the army of those bulls among tawny monkeys. The *vidyādharas* and great seers watched that great warrior as, mounted on horseback, he rampaged through the troops of tawny monkeys. One could mark his path, mired in flesh and blood and littered with the monkeys—huge as mountains—who had fallen. No sooner would the bulls among leaping monkeys resolve to attack him than Narāntaka would attack and pierce them. Raising his blazing dart in the midst of the battle, Narāntaka consumed the troops of tawny monkeys, as fire might the forests. No sooner would the forest-dwelling monkeys uproot trees and boulders than they would fall, struck down by that dart, like mountains riven by a thunderbolt.

[67–71] In that battle, mighty Narāntaka rampaged in all directions, like the wind in the rainy season, leveling everything in his path. Those heroes were unable to flee, or stand their ground, or even stir in any direction. For that mighty warrior pierced them all, whether they leapt, ran, or stood still. Pierced by that lone warrior, who, with his dart as brilliant as the sun, was like Yama, the ender of all things, the troops of tawny monkeys fell to the ground. Unable to withstand the blows of that dart, which had the crushing force of a thunderbolt, the monkeys wailed loudly. As they fell, the bodies of the heroes among the tawny monkeys resembled mountains falling as their tall summits were shattered by thunderbolts.

[72–76] [u]Meanwhile, those great monkey leaders who had earlier been struck down by Kumbhakarṇa, now fully recovered, approached Sugrīva. Gazing about him, Sugrīva saw the army of tawny monkeys fleeing in all directions, terrified in their fear of Narāntaka. As he watched the fleeing army, he spied Narāntaka, mounted on horseback and heading toward him, holding his dart. Then immensely powerful Sugrīva, overlord of the monkeys, addressed heroic Prince Aṅgada, who was equal in valor to

Śakra. “Hero, you must advance against that *rākṣasa*, the one mounted on horseback, who has been terrorizing the army of tawny monkeys. And you must swiftly kill him.”

[77–82] Upon hearing these words of his lord, Aṅgada burst forth from that host—so like a cloud—as does the many-rayed sun from a host of clouds. Adorned with his golden armlets and resembling a dense mass of stone, Aṅgada, foremost of the tawny monkeys, was as resplendent as a mountain laced with shining ore. Armed only with his claws and fangs and lacking any other weapon, Vālin’s immensely powerful son confronted Narāntaka and spoke these words: “Stop! Why bother with such common tawny monkeys? Hurl your dart swiftly against this chest of mine, as hard to the touch as adamant.” Upon hearing Aṅgada’s words, Narāntaka, biting his lips with his teeth and hissing like a serpent, flew into a rage. Then he brandished his blazing dart and suddenly loosed it against Aṅgada. But it shattered against the adamantine chest of Vālin’s son and fell to the ground.

[83–86] Then, glancing at that shattered dart, which now resembled the coils of a serpent torn to pieces by Suparṇa, Vālin’s son raised his palm and, with it, struck Narāntaka’s horse on the head. At that blow of his palm, the horse, which looked like a mountain, collapsed to the ground, its head shattered, its feet driven into the earth, the pupils of its eyes burst, and its tongue lolling out. When immensely powerful Narāntaka saw that his horse had fallen, slain, he was beside himself with rage. He raised his fist and, with it, struck Vālin’s son on the head in battle. His head split open by that fist, Aṅgada poured forth great gouts of scalding blood. For a moment he flared up in anger, then fainted. Regaining consciousness, he was astonished.

[87–90] Then Vālin’s great son, Aṅgada, clenched his fist, which resembled a mountain peak and the impact of which was equal to that of a thunderbolt, and brought it down upon Narāntaka’s chest. His chest shattered by the impact of that fist and his body drenched with blood, Narāntaka, like a mountain shattered by the force of a thunderbolt, fell to the ground vomiting flames. When that most eminent of heroes, Narāntaka, had thus been slain in battle by Vālin’s son, the foremost among the thirty gods, hovering in the sky, along with the forest-dwelling monkeys, gave a mighty cheer. When Aṅgada, that warrior of extraordinary might and valor, had performed this nearly impossible feat of valor—cheering the heart of

Rāma—he was somewhat astonished, but was filled once more with energy for battle.

Sarga 58

[1–4] When those bulls among the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos—Devāntaka, Trimūrdhan Paulastya, and Mahodara—saw that Narāntaka had been slain, they began to wail. Then mighty Mahodara, mounted upon a magnificent bull elephant as huge as a cloud, charged at Aṅgada, Vālin's immensely powerful son. And mighty Devāntaka too anguished at the slaughter of his brother, took up a blazing iron club and rushed toward Aṅgada. The heroic Triśiras, mounted on a chariot as radiant as the sun and yoked to splendid horses, also raced toward Vālin's son.

[5–10] Attacked by those three lords of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, crushers of the pride of the gods, Aṅgada tore up a tree with huge branches. Just as Śakra hurls his blazing thunderbolt, so did heroic Aṅgada violently hurl that huge tree with its huge branches at Devāntaka. But Triśiras cut it to pieces with arrows like venomous serpents. Then Aṅgada, seeing the tree splintered, leapt up into the sky. From there, that elephant among monkeys rained down trees and boulders. But Triśiras, in a towering rage, cut them to pieces with his sharp arrows. And Surāntaka as well smashed those trees with the tip of his iron club, while Triśiras assaulted heroic Aṅgada with arrows. Mahodara too, in a towering rage, charged at Vālin's son on his elephant and hit him on the chest with iron cudgels that struck with the force of thunderbolts.

[11–16] Meanwhile, in a towering rage, swift Devāntaka confronted Aṅgada and, after striking him with an iron club, swiftly withdrew. But although the son of Vālin was assaulted simultaneously by those three formidable *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, that immensely powerful and valorous warrior remained unshaken. Leaping up, he struck Mahodara's great elephant violently with his open hand. Its eyes knocked out, the bull elephant trumpeted loudly. Then, ripping out one of its tusks, the immensely powerful son of Vālin rushed upon Devāntaka in battle and struck him with it. Swaying with every limb like a tree buffeted by the wind, Devāntaka spewed blood the color of lac from his mouth. Then, recovering with difficulty, powerful and mighty Devāntaka brandished his dreadful iron club and once more struck Aṅgada.

[17–24] Struck with that iron club, the son of the lord of the monkeys sank to his knees on the ground but then leapt up once more. But as the son of the lord of the tawny monkeys sprang up, Triśiras struck him in the forehead with three dreadful arrows that resembled venomous serpents. When Hanumān and Nīla realized that Aṅgada had been surrounded by three of the bulls among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, they ran to his aid. Then Nīla hurled a mountaintop at Triśiras. But that wise son of Rāvaṇa shattered it with sharp arrows. Pierced by hundreds of arrows, its stony surface shredded, the mountaintop fell, shooting forth sparks and flames. Then, upon witnessing that explosion with delight, Devāntaka, with his iron club, rushed toward Hanumān, son of Māruta, in battle. But Hanumān, son of Māruta, leapt upon the charging Devāntaka and struck him on the head with his fist, which had the force of a thunderbolt. His head shattered by the crushing blow of that fist, Devāntaka, son of the *rākṣasa* king, all at once fell lifeless to the ground, his teeth and eyes knocked out, his tongue lolling.

[25–28] When mighty Devāntaka, foremost of *rākṣasa* warriors and foe of the gods, had been slain in battle, Trimūrdhan, enraged, loosed a fierce shower of sharp-tipped arrows at Nīla's chest. Deluged by those torrents of arrows and pierced in every limb, Nīla, the guardian of the monkey troops, was slack limbed and immobilized by mighty Triśiras. But then, regaining consciousness, Nīla ripped up a mountain along with its masses of trees, and, springing up with huge and terrible speed, he struck Mahodara on the head with it. Crushed together with his elephant by the mountain as it fell, Mahodara was mortally wounded and fell lifeless to the ground, like a mountain struck by a thunderbolt.

[29–33] When Triśiras saw that his paternal uncle had been slain, he took up his bow and, in a towering rage, riddled Hanumān with sharp arrows. But in a rage, Hanumān sprang up and tore the horses of Triśiras to pieces with his claws, just as a lion, king of beasts, might a mighty elephant. Then, seizing his javelin, Triśiras, son of Rāvaṇa, hurled it at the son of Anila, just as Yama, ender of all things, unleashes Kālarātri, the dark night of universal destruction. But the tiger among tawny monkeys caught that javelin, which had been hurled, as it flew unimpeded, like a blazing meteor hurtling through the sky. He broke it and roared. When the hosts of monkeys saw that Hanumān had broken that fearsome-looking javelin, they were delighted, and they roared thunderously like storm clouds.

[34–42] Then Triśiras, foremost among the *rākṣasas*, raised his sword and, in his rage, buried it in the chest of the monkey lord. Although he was injured by that sword stroke, mighty Hanumān, son of Māruta, struck Trimūrdhan on the chest with his open hand. When Hanumān struck him with his open hand, immensely powerful Triśiras let his weapons slip from his hands, and he fell to the ground unconscious. And as Triśiras fell, the great monkey, who looked like a mountain, grabbed his sword and roared, terrifying all the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos. Then that night-roaming *rākṣasa*, unable to bear that sound, sprang up and struck Hanumān with his fist. The great monkey was angered by the blow of that fist, and, in a rage, he seized that bull among *rākṣasas* by the crown. Then, with Triśiras's own sharp sword, the furious son of Anila cut off his heads—with their diadems and earrings—just as did Śakra the heads of Tvaṣṭṛ's son. Like so many stars fallen from the path of the sun, those heads of Indra's foe, huge as mountains, with their gaping orifices and their eyes blazing like Agni Vaiśvānara, fell to the ground. When Hanumān, whose valor was equal to that of Śakra, had slain Triśiras, foe of the gods, the leaping monkeys cheered, the earth trembled, and the *rākṣasas* fled in all directions.

[43–47] Once the extremely irascible and mighty Mahāpārśva saw that Triśiras had been slain as well as Mahodara and the unassailable warriors Devāntaka and Narāntaka, he flew into a rage and seized his splendid, blazing mace made of solid iron. It was encircled with bands of gold and smeared with flesh and blood. Reddened with the blood of his enemies, it shone with splendor. Adorned with red garlands, its tip blazing with energy, it could terrify even the mighty elephants Airāvata, Mahāpadma, and Sārvabhauma. Grasping that mace in a towering rage, mighty Mahāpārśva hurled himself upon the tawny monkeys, like the blazing fire at the end of a cosmic era.

[48–54] But the mighty monkey Ṛṣabha sprang up and, confronting Mahāpārśva, Rāvaṇa's younger brother, took a stand before him. Seeing that monkey, huge as a mountain, standing before him, Mahāpārśva, in a rage, struck him on the chest with that mace, which was like a thunderbolt. Struck by him with that mace, the bull among monkeys was rocked. His chest split open, he gushed forth gouts of blood. Regaining consciousness after a long time, Ṛṣabha, bull among monkeys, his lips quivering in his rage, glared at Mahāpārśva. Seizing that fearsome mace and whirling it

round and round, he struck Mahāpārśva Mattānīka with it in the forefront of the battle. Mangled by his own mace, his teeth and eyes knocked loose, Mahāpārśva collapsed, like a mountain struck by a thunderbolt. Once Rāvaṇa's brother had been slain, the army of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, which resembled an ocean, dropped its weapons and ran for its life, like an ocean scattering in all directions.

Sarga 59

[1–6] Immensely powerful Atikāya, that mountainous crusher of the pride of gods and *dānavas*, saw that his thunderous and hair-raising army had been devastated. And seeing that his brothers, whose valor was equal to that of Śakra, had been slain in battle together with his two paternal uncles, the brothers Mahodara and Mahāpārśva, bulls among *rākṣasas*, that warrior, who had been granted boons by Brahmā, flew into a rage in the midst of battle. Mounting his chariot, which blazed with the brilliance of a thousand suns, that foe of Śakra hurtled toward the monkeys. Loudly twanging his great bow, Atikāya, adorned with a diadem and burnished earrings, proclaimed his name and roared loudly. With his leonine roar, the proclamation of his name, and the fearsome sound of his bowstring, he terrified the monkeys.

[7–10] Gazing upon Atikāya's gigantic form, which was like that of Viṣṇu when he traversed the three worlds, all the monkeys were stricken with terror and fled in the ten directions. Confronted by Atikāya, their wits addled, the monkeys sought refuge in battle with Lakṣmaṇa's older brother, the refuge of all. Then Kākutstha gazed from afar at Atikāya, huge as a mountain, who stood mounted in his chariot, bow in hand, roaring like a black storm cloud. Observing that gigantic warrior, Rāghava was astonished. After reassuring the monkeys, he said to Vibhīṣaṇa:

[11–16] "Who is that mountainous warrior—armed with a bow and with the gaze of a lion—mounted in that huge chariot yoked to a thousand horses? Surrounded with his sharp lances and his formidable and glittering darts and iron cudgels, he resembles Maheśvara surrounded by his malignant spirits. Surrounded with his glittering chariot-javelins, which resemble the tongues of Kāla, he looks like a storm cloud surrounded by streaks of lightning. His well-strung bows with their golden facing illuminate his splendid chariot on every side, as does the rainbow, Śakra's

bow, the heavens. Who is this tiger among *rākṣasas*, the foremost among chariot-warriors, who approaches on a chariot as radiant as the sun, illuminating the battlefield? Illuminating the ten directions with arrows that have the brilliance of the sun's rays and, with the emblem of Rāhu, demon of the eclipse, waving from his flagstaff, he looks resplendent.

[17–24] "And his thrice-curved bow with golden facing, ornamented and reverberating like a thundercloud, is as resplendent as the rainbow, the bow of Indra of the hundred sacrifices. His great chariot is furnished with pennants and banners and has a fine frame. It is manned by four grooms and rumbles with the thunder of a storm cloud. There are thirty-eight quivers mounted on his chariot, along with fearsome bows, their bowstrings yellow with gold. And in his chariot there are two swords, one on each side. Clearly visible, their blades are fifteen feet in length and their hilts, six. They beautify both sides. With a red garland hung about his neck and his huge mouth like that of Kāla, that dark warrior, steadfast and huge as a great mountain, looks like the sun, bringer of light, rising above a storm cloud. His arms girded with golden armlets, he is as resplendent as Himalaya, greatest of mountains, with its tall twin peaks. With its two earrings, that radiant face of his resembles the orb of the full moon passing between the twin stars of the constellation Punarvasu. Tell me, great-armed hero, about that outstanding *rākṣasa* at the sight of whom all the monkeys have fled in all directions, overcome with fear."

[25–30] When immensely powerful Vibhīṣaṇa had been questioned in this fashion by Prince Rāma Rāghava of immeasurable power, he said to him: "The immensely powerful and enormously energetic king, ten-necked Rāvaṇa of fearsome deeds, is the younger brother of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa and is the overlord of the *rākṣasas*. He has a mighty son, the equal in battle of Rāvaṇa himself, respectful of his elders, deeply learned, and foremost of those who know all the divine weapon-spells. He is highly regarded for his skill on horseback, chariot, and elephant, with the sword, the bow, and the noose, in the arts of sowing dissension, conciliation, and bribery, as well as in statecraft and counsel. He is known as Atikāya, Dhānyamālinī's son. Relying on his arm, Laṅkā remains secure. His mind focused, he propitiated Brahmā by means of his austerities. Thus, he acquired divine weapon-spells and conquered his enemies.

[31–35] “And self-existent Brahmā granted him that suit of armor and that chariot, radiant as the sun, as well as invulnerability to the gods and *asuras*. He has defeated hundreds of gods and *dānavas*, protected the *rākṣasas*, and slaughtered the *yakṣas*. For he is Atikāya, the wise and mighty son of Rāvaṇa. He is a bull among *rākṣasas* and the crusher of the pride of the gods and *dānavas*. With his arrows he stopped wise Indra’s *vajra* in its course and repelled in battle the noose of Varuṇa, monarch of the waters. Therefore, bull among men, you must quickly exert yourself against him before he annihilates the monkey troops with his arrows.”

[36–42] Then mighty Atikāya, plunging into the hosts of tawny monkeys, twanged his bow and roared again and again. Seeing that foremost of chariot-warriors, fearsome to behold, mounted on his chariot, the great and preeminent leaping monkeys hurled themselves upon him. Armed with trees and mountain peaks, Kumuda, Dvivida, Mainda, Nīla, and Śarabha, acting as one, hurled themselves upon him. But immensely powerful Atikāya, foremost among those skilled in the use of divine weapon-spells, cut their trees and rocks to pieces with his gold-ornamented arrows. Then that mighty night-roaming *rākṣasa* with his fearsome body, facing those tawny monkeys, pierced them all in battle with arrows made of solid iron. Wounded by that hail of arrows, pierced in every limb, the leaping monkeys were unable to fight back against Atikāya in that great battle. The *rākṣasa* terrified the army of heroic tawny monkeys, just as a raging lion in the full flush of youth might a herd of deer.

[43–48] But there in the midst of the army of tawny monkeys, that *rākṣasa* lord would not strike any that did not resist. Then, armed with bow and quiver, he approached Rāma and arrogantly spoke these words: “Here I stand, mounted in my chariot, bow and arrow in hand; but I will not fight any ordinary foe. Let whomever has the ability coupled with resolve quickly give me battle here and now.” Now Saumitri, slayer of his foes, overheard those words of Atikāya as he was speaking. He could not abide them, and he flew into a rage. Leaping up, he seized his bow with a contemptuous smile. Leaping up in a rage, Saumitri drew an arrow from his quiver and bent his great bow right in front of Atikāya. The fearsome sound of Lakṣmaṇa’s bowstring could be heard, filling the earth, the mountains, the sky, and the ocean and terrifying the night-roaming *rākṣasas*. Upon

hearing the terrifying sound of Saumitri's bow, the mighty and immensely powerful son of the *rākṣasa* lord was astonished.

[49–55] Seeing that Lakṣmaṇa had leapt up, Atikāya, enraged, took up a sharp arrow and spoke these words: "You are a mere child, Saumitri, unskilled in deeds of valor. Get out of my way! Do you really want to provoke me to fight, I who am like Kāla himself? Not even Himalaya, the sky, or the earth itself is able to withstand the force of the divine weapons released by my arm. Would you want to stir up the fire of universal destruction when it is sleeping peacefully? Put down your bow and go back. Don't sacrifice your life by confronting me. Or if you are obstinate and do not wish to go back, then stay, and, losing your life, you shall go to the abode of Yama. Just look at these sharp arrows of mine, adorned with burnished gold. Resembling the weapon of Lord Śiva, they crush the pride of my enemies. This arrow, resembling a serpent, will drink your blood, just as a raging lion, king of beasts, would the blood of a king among elephants."

[56–62] When Prince Lakṣmaṇa had heard those angry and arrogant words of Atikāya in the midst of the battle, the exceedingly powerful and enormously majestic hero spoke these highly sensible words: "You cannot attain excellence by mere words; nor are true heroes produced by boasting. As long as I am standing here, armed with a bow, arrow in hand, you should demonstrate your prowess, evil-minded wretch! Show what you are made of through your deeds. You oughtn't boast. Only he who is truly endowed with manly valor is accounted a hero. You are armed with a bow, mounted in a chariot, and equipped with every kind of weapon. So demonstrate your prowess with arrows or divine weapons. Then, with my sharp arrows, I shall cause your head to fall, just as the wind does a ripened *tāla* fruit from its stalk. This very day, my arrows, adorned with burnished gold, will drink the blood spurting from the gaping holes made in your body by my arrowheads. You should not underestimate me, thinking, 'He is only a child.' Whether I be young or old, you must know me to be your death in battle."

[63–68] When Atikāya had heard those words of Lakṣmaṇa, reasonable and supremely sensible though they were, he was enraged and took up a splendid arrow. Then *vidyādharas*, spirits of the departed, gods, *daityas*, great seers, and the great *guhyakas* watched that fight. In a rage, Atikāya

fitted an arrow to his bow and shot it at Lakṣmaṇa, shrinking, as it were, the space between them. But as that sharp arrow, like a venomous serpent, hurtled toward him, Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes, cut it to pieces with a half-moon-headed arrow. When he saw his arrow cut to pieces, like a serpent whose coils have been slashed, Atikāya was beside himself with rage. He took up five more arrows. Then that night-roaming *rākṣasa* shot those arrows at Lakṣmaṇa. But before they could reach him, Bharata's younger brother cut them to pieces with his own sharp arrows.

[69–73] Once he had cut those arrows to pieces with his sharp arrows, Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes, took up another sharp arrow that seemed to blaze with energy. Taking it up, Lakṣmaṇa fitted it to his splendid bow. Then, drawing the bow, he released the arrow with tremendous force. And that mighty man struck that foremost of *rākṣasas* in the forehead with that straight arrow that had been drawn to the full. Buried in the forehead of that fearsome *rākṣasa*, the arrow, smeared with blood, resembled a serpent lord in battle. Rocked by Lakṣmaṇa's arrow, the *rākṣasa* was shaken, just as was the fearsome gateway of Tripura when it was struck by Rudra's arrow.

[74–80] Regaining his composure and reflecting, the immensely powerful *rākṣasa* thought, "Well done! The impact of your arrow proves you to be a praiseworthy opponent for me." Reflecting in this fashion, he lowered his face and both his arms. He advanced in his chariot, settling into its seat. That bull among *rākṣasas* took up one, three, five, or seven arrows at a time, nocked them, and then drew and released them. Loosed from the bow of the *rākṣasa* lord, those arrows, which were like Kāla himself and, with their golden fletching, were as radiant as the sun, seemed to light up the heavens. But not the least bit perturbed, Rāghava's younger brother cut those torrents of arrows loosed by the *rākṣasa* to pieces with many sharp arrows of his own. When Rāvaṇa's son, the enemy of the thirty gods, saw his arrows cut to pieces in battle, he was enraged and seized yet another sharp arrow. The immensely powerful warrior nocked that arrow and released it with tremendous force. It then struck Saumitri in the center of his chest as he advanced.

[81–88] Wounded in the chest by Atikāya in battle, Saumitri gushed forth great gouts of blood as does a rutting elephant rut fluid. But then that mighty man swiftly removed that arrow from his body. Then, taking up a sharp arrow and invoking a divine weapon-spell, he nocked it. He charged

that arrow with the divine weapon-spell of Agni. The arrow of that great warrior then blazed brightly, as did his bow. The immensely powerful Atikāya, in turn, invoked the divine weapon-spell of Sūrya, and, with it, he charged a gold-fletched arrow that resembled a serpent. Meanwhile, Lakṣmaṇa loosed at Atikāya the fearsome and blazing arrow that he had fitted to his bow, just as Kāla, the ender of all things, might his rod of doom. When he saw that arrow charged with the divine weapon-spell of Agni, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* released his blazing arrow, charged with the divine weapon-spell of Sūrya. Like angry serpents, the two arrows struck each other as they flew through the sky, their tips blazing with energy. Consuming each other, they fell to the ground. Reduced to ashes, their flames extinguished, those two splendid arrows blazed no more.

[89–95] Then Atikāya, in a towering rage, released the divine Aiṣīka missile. But mighty Saumitri cut that divine missile to pieces with the divine missile of Indra. Seeing that the divine Aiṣīka missile had been destroyed, the prince, son of Rāvaṇa, in a towering rage, charged an arrow with the divine weapon-spell of Yama. Then the night-roaming *rākṣasa* shot that divine missile at Lakṣmaṇa. But Lakṣmaṇa knocked it down with the divine missile of Vāyu. Then, in a towering rage, Lakṣmaṇa showered the son of Rāvaṇa with volleys of arrows, as might a storm cloud with torrents of rain. As those arrows struck Atikāya, their arrowheads shattered against his diamond-studded armor, and they fell with tremendous force to the ground. Perceiving that they had been ineffectual, glorious Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes, showered him with a thousand arrows. Although he was pelted with torrents of arrows, the mighty *rākṣasa* Atikāya, with his impenetrable armor, was not the least bit discomfited in that battle.

[96–99] Indeed, that foremost of men was unable to wound him in battle. But then Vāyu approached him and said: “Granted a boon from Brahmā, this *rākṣasa* is encased in impenetrable armor. You must pierce him with the divine missile of Brahmā; for there is no other way that he can be killed.” Then, upon hearing the words of Vāyu, Saumitri, who equaled Indra in valor, took up an arrow of irresistible force and swiftly charged it with the divine weapon-spell of Brahmā. As that splendid, sharp-tipped arrow was being charged by Saumitri with that supreme, divine weapon-spell, all the directions, as well as the moon, the sun, the great planets, and the heavens, shook with fear, and the earth groaned.

[100–106] Once he had charged that beautifully fletched arrow, which resembled the messenger of Yama, with the divine weapon-spell of Brahmā, Saumitri fitted it to his bow. Then, in that battle, he shot that arrow, which was like Indra's *vajra*, at the son of Indra's foe. Atikāya saw it hurtling toward him, loosed by Lakṣmaṇa in battle. Its force was irresistible, and, with its fletching bright with gold and splendid diamonds, it shone like fire. Sighting it, Atikāya struck it violently with many sharp arrows. But that arrow, swift as Suparṇa, continued to hurtle toward him with tremendous speed. Watching that arrow, which was like fiercely blazing Kāla, the ender of all things, Atikāya never slackened his efforts but continued to strike at it with javelins, broadswords, maces, hatchets, lances, and ploughshares. But that arrow, blazing with fire, was impervious to those wondrously formed weapons, and it violently struck off Atikāya's head, crowned with its diadem. Battered by Lakṣmaṇa's arrow, his head, along with its headdress, fell violently to the ground, as might the summit of Himalaya. Now that their unassailable enemy of fearsome strength had been slain, the multitude of monkeys, filled with joy, their faces like blooming lotuses, honored Lakṣmaṇa, who had accomplished their cherished goal.

Sarga 60

[1–2] Then the hosts of *rākṣasas* who had survived the slaughter immediately reported to Rāvaṇa that those bulls among *rākṣasas*, Triśiras, Atikāya, Devāntaka, and the rest, had been slain. When the king heard in this sudden fashion that they had been slain, he was stunned and his eyes filled with tears. Reflecting upon the destruction of his sons and the horrific slaughter of his brothers, the king began to brood deeply.

[3–7] Now, when that bull-like warrior Indrajit, son of the *rākṣasa* king, saw that the king was despondent and floundering in a sea of grief, he said these words: "Father, lord of the *rākṣasas*, you must not give way to despondency so long as Indrajit remains alive. For no one who is struck in battle by the arrows of Indra's foe can escape with his life. This very day, you will surely see Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa lying lifeless on the ground, his body pierced and dismembered by my arrows, his every limb bristling with sharp shafts. Now hear the vow of Śakra's foe, which is well founded and infused with both human and divine power: 'Today, with my unfailing arrows, I shall consume Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa.' This very day, Indra,

Vaivasvata, Viṣṇu, Mitra, the *sādhyas*, the Aśvins, Agni Vaiśvānara, Candra, and Sūrya shall witness my immeasurable valor, which is like the fearsome valor of Viṣṇu in Bali's sacrificial enclosure."

[8–11] When he had spoken in this fashion, Indrajit, the enemy of the lord of the thirty gods, took his leave of the king and, in high spirits, mounted a chariot as swift as the wind. It was yoked to splendid donkeys and equipped with the implements of war. Mounted in that chariot, the equal of the chariot of Indra himself, that immensely powerful tamer of his foes drove swiftly to where the battle raged. As great Indrajit set forth, many immensely powerful warriors followed him in great delight, their splendid bows in hand. Some were mounted on elephant-back, while others rode splendid chargers. They were armed with darts, war hammers, swords, battle-axes, and maces.

[12–17] Praised by the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, the foe of the lord of the thirty gods went forth to the fearsome blaring of conches and the thunderous sound of *bherī* drums. With his parasol of the hue of conch shell or the hare-marked moon, that crusher of his enemies was as resplendent as the sky illuminated by the full moon. That hero, foremost of all bowmen, was fanned with the most splendid, golden yak-tail fly whisks, all adorned with gold. Then, illuminated by Indrajit, who was unmatched in valor and equal in blazing splendor to the sun, the city of Laṅkā was as resplendent as the heavens illuminated by the radiant sun. When Rāvaṇa, the majestic overlord of the *rākṣasas*, saw his son marching forth surrounded by a vast host, he said to him: "You are a peerless warrior, my son. You have conquered even Vāsava in battle. How then would you not more easily slay Rāghava, a vulnerable mortal."

[18–23] Addressed in this fashion by the *rākṣasa* lord and having received his fulsome blessings, the hero proceeded swiftly to the shrine of Nikumbhilā in his horse-drawn chariot. Upon reaching the battleground, that immensely powerful tamer of his foes stationed the *rākṣasas* all around his chariot. Then, to the accompaniment of sacred *mantras* and in accordance with the ritual prescriptions, the foremost of *rākṣasas*, whose splendor was like that of Agni, eater of oblations, offered oblations to Agni, eater of oblations. The valorous *rākṣasa* lord offered oblations to Agni, the purifier, along with ritual offerings of parched grain accompanied by flowers and sandalwood paste. Weapons served as the *śarapatra* grass;

vibhītaka wood was the kindling. His garments were red, and his ladle was of black iron. Having strewn the fire altar there with weapons, including iron cudgels, in place of *śarapatra* grass, he seized the throat of a live, pure black goat.

[24–29] Once kindled, the smokeless fire with its huge flames displayed signs that betokened victory. Glowing like burnished gold, his flames swirling in an auspicious clockwise direction, Agni, the purifier, himself rose up and received that oblation. Foremost among those familiar with divine weapon-spells, Indrajit invoked the divine weapon-spell of Brahmā. And there with that spell, he infused his bow, his chariot, and all of his weaponry. And as that divine weapon-spell was being invoked and Agni, the purifier, was being gratified with oblations, the heavens shook along with the sun, the planets, the moon, and the constellations. Once Indrajit, whose blazing energy was like that of Agni, the purifier, and whose power was equal to that of great Indra, had made oblation to Agni, the purifier, he vanished into thin air along with his bow, arrows, sword, chariot, horses, and charioteer, his form no longer perceptible. Emerging from his own army, Indrajit swiftly plunged in among the monkey ranks, and there, in that great battle, invisible, he rained down a fearsome torrent of arrows, just as a black storm cloud does torrents of rain.

[30–34] Baffled by Indrajit's power of illusion, their bodies rent by the arrows of Śakra's conqueror, the tawny monkeys, huge as mountains, fell in battle uttering discordant cries, like lordly mountains smashed down by Indra's *vajra*. All they could see in the battle were the sharp-tipped arrows raining on the monkey troops. For they could not see the *rākṣasa*, the foe of the lord of the gods, concealed as he was by his power of illusion. Then the great *rākṣasa* lord filled all the directions with volleys of arrows as radiant as the sun, further disheartening the monkey lords. Brandishing lances, swords, and battle-axes, which were like shining fires and emitted blazing flames along with sparks, he fiercely rained them down upon the army of the lord of the leaping monkeys. Then, struck by the sharp arrows—blazing like fire—of the conqueror of Śakra, the leaders of the monkey troops resembled red-blossoming *kiṃśuka* trees.

[35–40] Pierced by the divine weapons of the *rākṣasa* lord, those bulls among monkeys fell, crawling over one another and uttering discordant cries. Some of them, peering into the sky, were struck in the eyes with

arrows so that they fell to the ground and clung to one another. Then, with darts, lances, and sharp arrows charged with *mantras*, Indrajit, foremost of *rākṣasas*, pierced all those tigers among the tawny monkeys: Hanumān, Sugrīva, Añgada, Gandhamādana, Jāmbavān, Suṣeṇa, Vegadarśin, Mainda, Dvivida, Nīla, Gavākṣa, Gaja, Gomukha, Kesari, Hariloman, the monkey Vidyuddaṃṣṭra, Sūryānana, Jyotimukha, the tawny monkey Dadhimukha, Pāvakākṣa, Nala, and the monkey Kumuda.

[41–49] Then, once he had torn apart the troop leaders of the tawny monkeys with maces and with arrows fletched with burnished gold, Indrajit pelted Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with massive torrents of arrows that shone like the rays of the sun, bringer of light. Pelted by those showers of arrows, Rāma regarded them no more seriously than showers of rain. Supremely wondrous in his majesty, he turned his gaze to Lakṣmaṇa and said this: “Here is that *rākṣasa* lord again, Lakṣmaṇa, the enemy of the lord of the gods. Relying upon the divine weapon-spell of Brahmā, he has laid low the fierce army of tawny monkeys and is now constantly harassing us with arrows. The great warrior, having been granted a boon by self-existent Brahmā, is hovering in the sky, his fearsome body hidden. How is it possible to kill Indrajit in battle today, when he is invisible and is wielding his divine weapon? I know that the self-existent lord Brahmā, who is the creator of all things, is inconceivable. And this divine weapon-spell belongs to him. Therefore, wise Lakṣmaṇa, with a calm mind you must endure with me the blows of these arrows here and now. The *rākṣasa* lord is filling all directions with massive torrents of arrows. And the whole army of the monkey king, its foremost heroes fallen, presents a sorry sight. Once he sees that we have fallen unconscious and have ceased to fight or show signs either of anger or excitement, he will surely return to Lañkā, the abode of the foes of the immortal gods, having achieved the greatest glory in battle.” At that point, the two brothers were cut down on the spot by the mass of Indrajit’s divine weapons. Having laid them low there, the *rākṣasa* lord roared with delight in battle. Having thus laid low in battle the army of the monkey king, as well as Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, he swiftly reentered the city of Lañkā, which lay under the protection of the arms of ten-necked Rāvaṇa.

Sarga 61

[1–4] Then, when the two heroes, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, had been struck down in the forefront of battle, the army of the leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys was stunned. Even Sugrīva, Nīla, Aṅgada, and Jāmbavān could do nothing. But then Vibhīṣaṇa, foremost among the wise, seeing that the army was despondent, addressed the king of the tree-dwelling monkeys and his heroic warriors, comforting them with inimitable words: "Have no fear! Just because the two sons of the king are lying helpless, this is no time for despondency. For in being struck down by the mass of Indrajit's divine weapons, they are merely observing the command of self-existent Brahmā. Brahmā's supreme divine weapon-spell of unfailing force was given to Indrajit by the self-existent one himself. If, in order to show their reverence for it, the king's two sons have fallen down, why is that an occasion for despondency?"

[5–6] When wise Hanumān Māruti, who had already once shown his reverence to Brahmā's divine weapon-spell, heard those words of Vibhīṣaṇa, he said this to him: "Let us comfort any of those in the decimated army of the swift monkeys who may still be alive."

[7–13] Then, torches in hand, those two heroes, Hanumān and that foremost of the *rākṣasas* Vibhīṣaṇa, together roamed the battlefront during that night. They saw the ground heaped up on every side with shining weapons that had been dropped and with fallen monkeys, huge as mountains, oozing blood from their limbs and dribbling urine, their tails, hands, thighs, feet, fingers, and necks severed. And there Vibhīṣaṇa and Hanumān saw that Sugrīva, Aṅgada, Nīla, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, Jāmbavān, Suṣeṇa, Vegadarśin, Āhuka, Mainda, Nala, Jyotimukha, Dvivida, and Panasa had been struck down in battle. For within the fifth part of a day, Indrajit, self-existent Brahmā's favorite, had struck down six hundred and seventy million swift monkeys. Seeing that that fearsome host, which was like the vast flood of the ocean, had been decimated by arrows, Hanumān and Vibhīṣaṇa sought out Jāmbavān.

[14–18] Observing Jāmbavān, the wise and heroic son of Prajāpati, who, riddled with hundreds of arrows and showing the signs of advanced age, resembled a dying flame, Vibhīṣaṇa Paulastya approached him and spoke these words: "I trust, noble sir, that you have not been mortally wounded by these sharp arrows." Upon hearing the words of Vibhīṣaṇa, Jāmbavān, bull among apes, uttered this speech, articulating the words only with great

difficulty: “Mighty hero, lord of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, wounded as I am by these sharp arrows, I cannot see you, but I recognize you by your voice. O *rākṣasa*, son of chaos, does the foremost of the monkeys Hanumān, in whom Añjanā and Vāyu Mātariśvan have an excellent son, still live?”

[19–23] When Vibhīṣaṇa heard these words of Jāmbavān, he said this: “Why do you ignore the king’s sons Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and ask only about Māruti? Noble sir, you have not shown the same extraordinary concern for King Sugrīva, Añgada, or even Rāghava himself as you have for the son of Vāyu.” Upon hearing the words of Vibhīṣaṇa, Jāmbavān spoke these words: “Now hear, tiger among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, why I inquired only about Māruti. So long as Hanumān is alive, then our army will survive, even if it should be massacred. But if that hero has lost his life, then, even though we survive, we are as good as dead. For, dear boy, if Māruti, the equal of Māruta and the rival in power of Agni Vaiśvānara, still lives, only then do we have any hope of survival.”

[24–34] Then Hanumān, son of Māruta, approached wise Jāmbavān. Devotedly clasping his feet, he respectfully greeted him. Although his every organ was in agony, when Jāmbavān, bull among apes, heard Hanumān’s words, he felt as if he had been born again. Then the immensely powerful Jāmbavān said to Hanumān: “Come, tiger among the tawny monkeys, you must save the monkeys. For no one else possesses valor equal to the task. You are the monkeys’ greatest friend. Now is the moment for you to show your prowess; for I can see no one else who can accomplish this. You must heal the arrow wounds of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who have been struck down, and thus restore the spirits of the hosts of heroic apes and monkey. Taking the highest path, far above the ocean, you must go, Hanumān, to Himalaya, greatest of mountains. Then, slayer of your foes, you will see the great and forbidding Mount Ṛṣabha, all made of gold, and the peak of Mount Kailāsa. Between those two peaks, hero, you will see the mountain of healing herbs, which, covered with every sort of healing herb, glows with unequaled radiance. And growing on its peak, tiger among monkeys, you will find four healing herbs, glowing so as to illuminate the ten directions. They are *mṛtasaṃjīvaṇī*, ‘the restorer of life to the dead,’ *viśalyakaraṇī*, ‘the healer of arrow wounds,’ *sauvarṇakaraṇī*, ‘the restorer of a golden glow,’ and the great healing herb *saṃdhānī*, ‘the joiner of limbs.’ You must

gather them all, Hanumān, and swiftly return. For you must restore the tawny monkeys to life and rally them, son of Vāyu, bearer of scents.”

[35–43] When Hanumān, bull among tawny monkeys, had heard those words of Jāmbavān, he was filled with a great upsurge of strength, as is the ocean with its mighty currents. Perching on the top of the mountain slope and crushing that foremost of mountains, the hero Hanumān looked like a second mountain himself. Then, crumbling under the feet of that tawny monkey, the mountain caved in. For crushed so severely, it was unable to bear its own weight. The tremendous force of that tawny monkey caused the mountain’s trees to fall to the ground and burst into flame. And as it was being crushed by Hanumān, its peaks shattered. As that great mountain, its trees and rock faces smashed, was being crushed, it shook so that the monkeys could not keep their footing. With her great gateways shaking and the gates of her buildings crumbling, Laṅkā, overcome with panic in the night, seemed almost to be dancing. Crushing that mountain, the mountainous Hanumān, son of Māruta, made the earth together with the ocean tremble. As he crushed the mountain with his feet, he opened his mouth, which was as fearsome as the gaping mare’s head fire that lies beneath the sea, and he roared loudly, terrifying the *rākṣasas*. When they heard that extraordinary roar of fiercely roaring Hanumān, all the *rākṣasas* in Laṅkā were paralyzed with fear.

[44–49] Then, after first offering obeisance to Rāma, Māruti, that scorcher of his foes, so fearsome in his valor, turned his thoughts to that vital mission on behalf of Rāghava. Extending his tail, which resembled a serpent, crouching down, laying back his ears, and opening his mouth, which was like the gaping mare’s head fire that lies beneath the sea, Hanumān leapt into the sky with terrifying force. With his great speed he carried along with him stands of trees, mountains, boulders, and lesser monkeys. Drawn upward and swept along by the force of his arms and thighs, they fell into the ocean as their speed slackened. Stretching out his arms, which resembled the coils of serpents, the son of Vāyu, his power like that of Garuḍa, foe of serpents, headed toward Mount Meru, the prominent king of the mountains, drawing, so it seemed, the directions in his wake. Then, as he flew swiftly along, like the discus loosed by Viṣṇu’s fingers, he looked down upon the ocean with its roiling garland of waves and all its creatures tossed violently about. Observing mountains, forests, lakes, rivers,

ponds, splendid cities, and prosperous lands, Hanumān, whose swiftness equaled that of his father, flew swiftly onward.

[50–55] Reaching the path of the sun, he flew on tirelessly. Then that foremost of tawny monkeys spied Himalaya, greatest of mountains. It had various kinds of waterfalls and many caves and rushing streams. It was endowed with beautiful peaks that resembled white clouds. As he approached that great lord of the mountains, with its huge, splendid, and formidable peaks, he spied vast and holy ashrams frequented by the hosts of the foremost gods and seers. He saw the abode of Brahmā, the abode of Hiraṇyagarbha in his silver-naveled form, the abode of Śakra, the place where Rudra loosed his arrows, the abode of Hayānana the horse-faced god, and the luminous place where Brahmā's head fell. And he saw the servants of Vaivasvata. He saw the place where the *vajra* was presented as well as the abode of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa. He also saw the abode of the sun, resplendent as the sun itself, the throne of Brahmā, the place of Śañkara's bow, and the very navel of the earth. Then he saw the prominent Mount Kailāsa, the rock face of the Himalayas, and the prominent golden mountain Ṛṣabha. And, at last, he spied the lordly mountain of all herbs, which was illuminated by all its glowing herbs of healing.

[56–60] When Hanumān, son of Vāsava's messenger, the wind god, saw that lordly mountain of healing herbs, glowing as if with flames of fire, he was astonished. Alighting on it, he began to search there for the healing herbs. The great monkey, son of Māruta, roamed that mountain bearing divine herbs of healing for thousands of leagues. However, recognizing the purpose for which he had come, all the powerful healing herbs on that foremost of mountains made themselves invisible. Unable to find them, great Hanumān was furious and bellowed loudly in his rage. Losing patience, his eyes blazing like fire, he said these words to that lordly mountain: "What is this that you have thus resolved upon, in your lack of compassion toward Rāghava? This very day, lord of mountains, overwhelmed by the strength of my arms, you shall see yourself smashed to pieces."

[61–64] Then, forcibly seizing hold of its peak, filled with thousands of minerals, together with its trees, elephants, and gold, he violently tore it off so that its summit crumbled and the tops of its slopes began to slide. Tearing it off, that hero, whose fearsome power was like that of Garuḍa,

flew up into the sky, terrifying the worlds, together with the gods and the lords of the gods. Then, praised by innumerable creatures of the air, he proceeded swiftly on his way. Grasping that peak, which shone like the sun, bringer of light, he followed the path of the sun, bringer of light. Then, when he whose radiance was like that of the sun drew near the sun, he appeared to be a rival sun, bringer of light. Holding that mountain, the mountainous son of Vāyu, bearer of scents, shone as brightly in the sky as Viṣṇu holding aloft his fiery, thousand-bladed discus.

[65–68] Then, when the monkeys caught sight of him, they roared, and he too, spotting them, roared back in delight. But when the *rākṣasas* in Laṅkā heard their resounding cries, they roared more fearsomely still. Then great Hanumān alighted on splendid Mount Trikūṭa in the midst of the monkey army. After bowing his head in respectful salutation to the foremost among the tawny monkeys, he embraced Vibhīṣaṇa there. No sooner had the two human princes smelled the fragrance of those powerful healing herbs than they were freed on the spot from their arrow wounds. The others too, the heroic tawny monkeys, stood up as well. Then that immensely powerful tawny monkey, the son of Vāyu, bearer of scents, swiftly took the mountain of healing herbs back to the Himalayas and then rejoined Rāma.

Sarga 62

[1–3] Then Sugrīva, the immensely powerful overlord of the monkeys, spoke sensibly, instructing mighty Hanumān as to what should be done next: "Since Kumbhakarṇa has been slain and the *rākṣasa* princes slaughtered, Rāvaṇa will now no longer be able to launch a sortie against us. Bulls among leaping monkeys! Those leaping monkeys who are powerful and agile are to take torches and leap into Laṅkā at once."

[4–7] Then, when the sun had set and the dread onset of night had come, the leaping monkeys marched toward Laṅkā, holding torches. Overrun on every side by swarms of tawny monkeys holding torches, the sentries at the gates, with their hideous eyes, abruptly fled. In a frenzy, the monkeys unleashed fire, the eater of oblations, on gateways, towers, highways, various streets, and mansions. And the fire, eater of oblations, consumed thousands of houses and the residences of all the *rākṣasas*, including those who performed the household rites.

[8–11] Fire, the purifier of all things, consumed thousands of the houses of the residents of Lañkā. Some of those residents wore armor, beautified with gold, while others wore garlands of flowers and costly garments. Some, their eyes rolling from drinking rum, staggered in their intoxication. The garments of some were clutched at by their lovers. Some held maces, lances, or swords in their hands, as they raged at the enemy, while others went on eating and drinking. Some were asleep with their beloveds in costly beds, while others, terrified, grabbed their sons and fled swiftly in all directions. As the fire, the purifier, burned their homes, it flared up again and again.

[12–18] And the fire consumed mansions that looked like mountains. They were firmly built and costly, beautiful with their grand upper stories. They were shaped like full- and half-moons made of gold, soaring aloft with their penthouses. Their round windows were adorned with jewels. They were richly furnished throughout. Adorned with gems and coral, they seemed almost to touch the sun, bringer of light, and they echoed with the cries of *krauñcas* and peacocks, the strains of lutes, and the tinkling of ornaments. Wreathed in flames, their gates looked like masses of clouds encircled with lightning at summer's end. As they were being burned alive, the exquisite women, who had been sleeping in their lofty mansions, cast off all their ornaments and loudly shrieked, "Ah! Ah!" The dwellings there, engulfed in fire, collapsed, like the peaks of a huge mountain smashed by the *vajra* of Indra, the *vajra* wielder. As those mansions burned, they looked from afar like the peaks of the Himalayas with their thickets of glowing herbs.

[19–23] With the rooftops of its mansions burning and brightly illuminated with flames, Lañkā looked that night as if it were filled with red-blossoming *kiṃśuka* trees. With its elephants and horses turned loose by their keepers, Lañkā resembled the ocean with its huge creatures thrashing about at the end of a cosmic era. Whenever a terrified elephant would encounter a horse roaming free, it would run away, and when a terrified horse would encounter a terrified elephant it too would shy away. Set ablaze by the tawny monkeys, the city in an instant came to resemble the blazing earth, bearer of wealth, at the dreadful destruction of the world. The cries of the womenfolk, who shrieked loudly as they were enveloped in smoke and scorched by the flames, could be heard for a distance of ten leagues.

[24–29] Meanwhile, the tawny monkeys, eager for battle, violently pounced upon any of the *rākṣasas* who rushed forth, their bodies ablaze. The shouts of the monkeys and the wailing of the *rākṣasas* made the ten directions, the ocean, and the earth itself resound. Then the great warriors, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, now healed of their arrow wounds, calmly took up their splendid bows. Twanging his splendid bow, Rāma produced a thunderous sound that sowed terror among the *rākṣasas*. As he twanged his great bow, Rāma looked as splendid as Lord Bhava when, in his rage, he twangs his bow that consists of the *vedas*. Those three sounds—the clamor of the monkeys' shouts, the wailing of the *rākṣasas*, and the twanging of Rāma's bowstring—filled the ten directions.

[30–34] Shattered by the arrows loosed from Rāma's bow, the citadel's gateway, which was like the peak of Mount Kailāsa, crashed to the ground. Then, when the *rākṣasa* lords saw Rāma's arrows in their houses and mansions, they began frantic preparations for war. And as the *rākṣasa* lords, roaring like lions, girded themselves for battle, the night took on the aspect of the dark night of universal destruction. Then great Sugrīva commanded the monkey lords as follows: "Creeping near, you must assault the gate and give battle, bulls among leaping monkeys. And if any one of you, no matter where he may be posted, should disobey, he is to be pounced upon and slain as a violator of the king's command."

[35–38] When the monkey leaders, their hands illuminated by their flaming torches, had approached the gate and taken up their positions there, rage seized hold of Rāvaṇa. The violent force of the expansion of his body threw the ten directions into confusion, for he looked like an incarnation of the wrath that fills the body of Rudra. In a rage, he sent forth Nikumbha and Kumbha, the two sons of Kumbhakarṇa, accompanied by many *rākṣasas*. Roaring like a lion, the lord of the *rākṣasas* commanded all of those *rākṣasas*, "*Rākṣasas*! Depart at once."

[39–44] Then, at his command, the heroic *rākṣasas*, roaring again and again, marched forth from Laṅkā, their weapons glittering. With its terrifying horses, chariots, and elephants, and crowded with various types of foot soldiers, the fearsome *rākṣasa* army emerged into view, its lances, maces, swords, darts, iron cudgels, and bows glittering. Its valor and prowess were terrifying. Its darts were flashing, and it resounded with hundreds of little bells. The soldiers, their arms covered with golden

ornaments, swung their battle-axes about and whirled their mighty weapons. They had fixed their arrows to their bows. They perfumed the strong breeze with their fragrances, floral wreaths, and the honey-wine of their stirrup-cups. Filled with mighty warriors and rumbling like a great storm cloud, the army was truly fearsome. Seeing that truly terrifying army of the *rākṣasas* approaching, the army of leaping monkeys leapt forward, roaring loudly.

[45–52] Springing swiftly forward, the great *rākṣasa* army hurled itself at the enemy host, as a moth might hurl itself into a flame. With its iron clubs—like bolts of lightning—burnished from the rubbing of their arms, the *rākṣasas*' magnificent army shone more brightly still. Then some of the fearsome-looking night-roaming *rākṣasas* began to cut down the monkey heroes on all sides with their sharp swords. The warriors on both sides cursed, bit, struck down, and killed one another. One cried, "Attack!" "He's attacking!" said another, while still a third cried, "I'll attack!" "Did you wound him?" "Stand!" Thus did they shout there to one another. With huge darts held on high amid a welter of fists, lances, and swords, the immensely fierce battle between the monkeys and the *rākṣasas* raged on. The *rākṣasas* cut down the monkeys ten and seven at a time, while the monkeys slaughtered the *rākṣasas* in battle ten and seven at a time. Then the monkeys cut off and surrounded the *rākṣasa* troops, whose hair and drawstrings were flying loose, their armor and battle standards scattered.

Sarga 63

[1–4] In the thick of that fearsome slaughter of heroes, Aṅgada, thirsting for battle, encountered the heroic *rākṣasa* Kampana. After challenging Aṅgada, Kampana, in a rage, swiftly struck first, hitting him with his mace. Struck with such violence, Aṅgada staggered. But coming to his senses, powerful Aṅgada hurled the peak of a mountain. Kampana then fell to the ground, slain by that blow. Now that their champions were slain, the *rākṣasa* troops, deeply shaken, ran headlong to Kumbha, Kumbhakarṇa's son. When Kumbha saw them approaching so swiftly, he calmed them.

[5–8] Then, in deep concentration, Kumbha, that foremost of bowmen, took up his bow and loosed arrows that looked like venomous snakes and could rend bodies. With the arrows fixed to it, his splendid bow shone more brightly still as if it were a second bow of Indra, illumined by the splendor

of lightning and a great rainbow. Then, with a beautifully feathered, gold-fletched arrow that he had drawn back as far as his ear before releasing it, he struck Dvivida. Struck violently by that arrow, that best of leaping monkeys, who resembled a mountain peak, lost his footing and collapsed, dazed and twitching.

[9–12] Seeing his brother wounded in that great battle, Mainda seized a huge boulder and came running at full speed. The immensely powerful Mainda flung that boulder at the *rākṣasa*. But Kumbha shattered it with five blazing arrows. Then, nocking another arrow, tipped with a splendid arrowhead and resembling a venomous serpent, the immensely powerful *rākṣasa* struck Dvivida's elder brother in the chest with it. Struck by him in the vitals with such a blow, Mainda, leader of the monkey troops, fell to the ground, stunned.

[13–17] When Añgada saw that his two immensely powerful maternal uncles had fallen, he charged swiftly at Kumbha, who stood with bow drawn. As Añgada rushed upon him, Kumbha pierced him—first with five iron shafts and then with three more sharp arrows—as one might an elephant with javelins. Mighty Kumbha pierced Añgada with various arrows adorned with gold, their tips honed to razor sharpness, their cutting edges keen. Although his body was pierced all over, Vālin's son, Añgada, was not shaken. He rained hails of trees and boulders upon Kumbha's head. But Kumbhakarṇa's majestic son cut down all those trees and smashed the boulders—everything that was thrown by Vālin's son.

[18–22] Seeing the leader of the monkey troops rushing upon him, Kumbha struck him in the brow with two arrows, as one might an elephant with two flaming brands. Covering his eyes, which were bathed in blood, with one hand, Añgada seized a nearby *sāla* tree with the other. But even as he was about to swiftly hurl that tree, which looked like the flagstaff of Indra and was as huge as Mount Mandara, Kumbha cut him down with seven sharp arrows, rending his body, while all the *rākṣasas* looked on. In great agony, Añgada collapsed and lost consciousness. Seeing the unassailable Añgada in agony, drowning as it were in the ocean, the foremost among the tawny monkeys reported it to Rāghava.

[23–28] When Rāma heard that Vālin's son had been gravely wounded in the great battle, he sent forth the foremost among tawny monkeys, led by Jāmbavān. As soon as they heard Rāma's orders, those tigers among

monkeys hurled themselves in a towering rage upon Kumbha, who stood with bow drawn. In their desire to rescue Añgada, those bulls among monkeys raced onward with trees and boulders in their hands, their eyes red with rage. In a rage, Jāmbavān, Suṣeṇa, and the monkey Vegadarśin rushed toward Kumbhakarṇa's heroic son. But when Kumbha saw those immensely powerful monkey lords rushing toward him, he stopped them in their tracks with a torrent of arrows, as a barrage of trees might stop a rushing stream. For when they ran into that mass of arrows, the great monkey lords could no more get past it than can the ocean, the great reservoir of the waters, its shore.

[29–35] But when Sugrīva, lord of the leaping monkeys, saw that the troops of tawny monkeys had been overwhelmed by those hails of arrows, he stepped in front of Añgada, his brother's son, and rushed swiftly upon Kumbha in battle, just as a swift lion might upon an elephant roaming the mountain slopes. The immensely powerful Sugrīva tore up huge mountains as well as many *aśvakarṇas*, *dhavas*, and various other trees, and let fly with them. But with his sharp arrows, Kumbhakarṇa's majestic son cut down that hail of trees—so difficult to withstand—that covered the sky. Completely riddled with sharp arrows by that fierce and celebrated marksman Kumbha, those trees resembled fearsome hundred-slayers. But Sugrīva, the majestic, fearless, and immensely powerful overlord of the monkeys, was not in the least disturbed when he saw his hail of trees cut to pieces by Kumbha. Although he was himself grievously wounded, Sugrīva withstood those arrows. Then, snatching away Kumbha's bow, as lustrous as the bow of Indra, he broke it.

[36–44] Then, when Sugrīva had accomplished this all-but-impossible feat, he swiftly bore down upon Kumbha, who now resembled an elephant with broken tusks, and, in a rage, said to him: "Elder brother of Nikumbha, your power and the force of your arrows are truly extraordinary. Your chivalry and your majesty are shared only by Rāvaṇa himself. Peer of Prahrāda, Bali, Indra the slayer of Vṛtra, Kubera, and Varuṇa, you alone take after your father, though you are mightier still. The thirty gods can no more get the better of you—a single-handed, great-armed tamer of foes, lance in hand—than can worldly cares, one who has vanquished his senses. Your paternal uncle Rāvaṇa conquered the gods and *dānavas* through the gift of a boon, while Kumbhakarṇa did so through his own enormous

strength. You are Indrajit's equal in archery and Rāvaṇa's in valor. In strength and prowess you are the foremost among *rākṣasas* in the world today. Let all beings witness this day the great and extraordinary clash in battle between you and me, like that between Śakra and Śambara. You have performed an unparalleled feat and demonstrated your mastery of missiles; for you have felled all these heroes among the tawny monkeys, fearsome in their valor. It is only out of fear of incurring censure that I have not killed you thus far, hero. For you must be exhausted after performing this feat. Once you are rested, you shall witness my strength."

[45–48] Kumbha had first been flattered, but now, at the contemptuous words of Sugrīva, his blazing energy flared up, like that of a sacrificial fire into which an oblation of melted butter has been poured. Then, leaping up, Kumbha hurled himself upon Sugrīva and, in a rage, struck him on the chest with a fist that had the force of a thunderbolt. His skin was torn open and his blood poured out; for that fist, with its tremendous force, had penetrated to the bone. Then, from that impact, there briefly sprang forth a blazing flame, like the flame that arises on Mount Meru when it is struck by lightning.

[49–53] Although Sugrīva, the immensely powerful bull among monkeys, had been struck there by him, he clenched his fist, as hard as adamant. Then the mighty monkey brought that fist, which, radiant with a thousand rays of light, was as brilliant as the sun's orb, down upon Kumbha's chest. Struck by that fist, the *rākṣasa* fell swiftly, like the red planet Mars, with its glowing rays, somehow fallen from the heavens. As Kumbha's body fell, its chest caved in by that fist, it looked like the body of Sūrya, lord of cows, when he was vanquished by Rudra. When Kumbha had been slain in battle by that bull among leaping monkeys, so fearsome in his valor, the earth trembled together with its mountains and forests, while tremendous fear filled the *rākṣasas*.

Sarga 64

[1–10] When Nikumbha saw that his brother had been struck down by Sugrīva, he glared at the lord of the monkeys, as if to burn him up with his rage. That hero then took up a splendid iron club. It was bound with garlands of flowers, stamped with the sign of five fingers, and it was as huge as the peak of a lordly mountain. It was bound with plates of gold and

adorned with diamonds and coral. That fearsome dispeller of the *rākṣasas*' fear was like the rod of Yama. It was like the flagstaff of Śakra. Brandishing it in battle, immensely powerful Nikumbha, fearsome in his valor, opened wide his mouth and roared. With his iron club and his ornaments—the golden necklace hanging across his chest, the armlets on his arms, his burnished earrings, and his variegated garland—Nikumbha resembled a storm cloud replete with thunder, lightning, and rainbow. The tip of that huge warrior's iron club could smash the lair of the winds in the sky. It blazed like a roaring, smokeless fire, purifier of all things. The whirling of Nikumbha's iron club seemed to set the very sky spinning, along with the heavenly city of Viṭapāvatī with its splendid mansions of the *gandharvas*, the celestial city of Amarāvatī with all its mansions, and with its constellations, its hosts of stars, the moon, and the great planets. With his iron club and ornaments for his flames and his rage for kindling, the fire that was Nikumbha was as unapproachable as the fire at the end of a cosmic era when it blazes forth.

[11–14] The *rākṣasas* and the monkeys were frozen with fear. But mighty Hanumān, thrusting out his chest, took a stand before him. Then mighty Nikumbha, whose arms resembled iron clubs, brought that iron club, radiant as the sun, bringer of light, down upon the chest of mighty Hanumān. But that iron club shattered violently into a hundred pieces against his broad and adamantine chest, so that it resembled a hundred flaming meteors in the heavens. And shaken by that iron club, the great monkey staggered under the blow, as would a mountain during an earthquake.

[15–20] Struck by that iron club in this fashion, the immensely powerful Hanumān, foremost among the leaping monkeys, tightly clenched his fist. Raising it, the forceful, immensely powerful, and mighty monkey, whose power was that of Vāyu, drove it forcefully into Nikumbha's chest. His skin was torn open and the blood gushed forth. That fist sparked flames that resembled lightning bursting forth. Nikumbha staggered under that blow, but, recovering, he seized the immensely powerful Hanumān. Seeing immensely powerful Hanumān swept up by Nikumbha, the inhabitants of Laṅkā roared frighteningly in the midst of battle. But even as he was being carried off in this fashion by Kumbhakarṇa's son, the son of Anila struck him with a fist that had the force of a thunderbolt.

[21–24] Then, freeing himself, Hanumān, son of Māruta, leapt to the ground and swiftly began to belabor Nikumbha. Exerting all his strength, he threw Nikumbha down and pummeled him. Then, leaping up, that powerful monkey landed on his chest with tremendous force. Locking Nikumbha's neck in both his arms, Hanumān twisted it until he tore off the huge head of the *rākṣasa*, who was shrieking horribly. Once Nikumbha had been slain in battle by Pavana's son, an intense and terrifying battle broke out between the enraged armies of Daśaratha's son and the *rākṣasa* lord.

Sarga 65

[1–4] Upon hearing that Nikumbha had been slain and Kumbha struck down as well, Rāvaṇa, in a towering rage, flared up like fire. Beside himself with grief and rage, the *rākṣasa*, son of chaos, exhorted large-eyed Makarākṣa, Khara's son: "Go, son, at my command, with an army. You must kill Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa along with the forest-dwelling monkeys." Upon hearing these words of Rāvaṇa, the proud night-roaming *rākṣasa* hero Makarākṣa, Khara's courageous son, replied, "Very well."

[5–8] Then, after respectfully saluting and reverentially circumambulating ten-necked Rāvaṇa, the mighty *rākṣasa* went forth from that splendid mansion at Rāvaṇa's command. He then said this to the officer who was standing by: "Let my chariot be brought at once and have the army brought up quickly." Upon hearing those words of his, that night-roaming *rākṣasa* officer had the chariot and army brought up. After reverentially circumambulating the chariot, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* mounted it and urged on his charioteer, crying, "Drive my chariot swiftly."

[9–12] Then Makarākṣa said this to all those *rākṣasas*: "*Rākṣasas*! You must all fight as my vanguard. I have been commanded by Rāvaṇa, the great king of the *rākṣasas*, to kill both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in battle. This very day, night-roaming *rākṣasas*, with my splendid arrows I shall slay Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, the tree-dwelling monkey Sugrīva, and his monkeys. And this very day, hurling my lance, I shall consume the vast host of the monkeys that has assembled here, just as fire does dry kindling."

[13–16] Upon hearing that speech of Makarākṣa, all of those mighty night-roaming *rākṣasas*, armed with various weapons, formed themselves into a column. Terrifying with their great fangs, yellow eyes, and bristling hair, those heroes, who could take on any form at will, roared like bull

elephants trumpeting. Surrounding the huge son of Khara, those huge *rākṣasas* then marched forth in great excitement, shaking the earth. A deafening roar arose on every side as they sounded thousands of battle conches and *bherī* drums, clapped their upper arms, and roared out their battle cries.

[17–21] But suddenly the whip slipped from the hand of Makarākṣas's charioteer, and the *rākṣasa*'s battle standard fell. The horses yoked to his chariot were robbed of their strength. Moving along with halting steps, despondent, they proceeded with tearful faces. As fierce and evil-minded Makarākṣa marched forth, a harsh and fearsome wind filled with dust began to blow. Although they saw those omens, all those immensely powerful *rākṣasas* paid them no heed and proceeded to where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa stood. Their bodies as dark in hue as clouds, elephants, or buffaloes, the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, having been wounded many times with sword and mace in the forefront of battle, were seasoned in combat. They raced onward, roaring and crying out, "Here I am!" "Here I am!"

Sarga 66

[1–5] When the bulls among monkeys saw that Makarākṣa had marched forth, they all immediately leapt up and arrayed themselves, eager for battle. Then there ensued a tremendous, hair-raising battle between the night-roaming *rākṣasas* and the leaping monkeys, just like that between the gods and the *dānavas*. The monkeys and the night-roaming *rākṣasas* belabored each other, the former with blows of trees and hails of boulders, the latter with volleys of lances and blows of iron clubs. From every side the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, who prowl in the darkness, slaughtered those lions among monkeys with javelins, lances, maces, swords, iron cudgels, spears, short javelins, volleys of arrows, nooses, war hammers, staves, *nirghātas*, and other weapons as well.

[6–8] Tormented by Khara's son with his hails of arrows, the monkeys panicked. Stricken with terror, they all fled. When the *rākṣasas* saw that the forest-dwelling monkeys were fleeing, they roared like lions in their excitement. The *rākṣasas* then took on an air of victory. But even as the monkeys fled in all directions, Rāma stopped the *rākṣasas* in their tracks with a hail of arrows.

[9–16] When the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Makarākṣa saw that his *rākṣasas* had been stopped in their tracks, he was consumed with the fire of anger, and he said these words: “Stay where you are, Rāma! I challenge you to single combat. With sharp arrows loosed from my bow, I shall rob you of your life. You are the one who killed my father back then in the Daṇḍaka forest. Therefore, when I think that the author of that foul deed is standing right before me, my rage redoubles. My whole body is burning fiercely in that I did not catch sight of you, you evil-minded Rāghava, back then in the great forest. But now, Rāma, as luck would have it, I find you here right before my eyes. I have been as desperate to catch you as a famished lion is a deer. This very day, dispatched to the realm of Yama, king of the dead, by the impact of my arrows, you shall meet the heroes you have slain. But what is the use of endless talking? Hear my words, Rāma. Let all the worlds behold the two of us on the battlefield. So now, in the midst of this great conflict, give battle, Rāma, with any weapon in which you are skilled—a missile, a mace, or even your bare hands.”

[17–21] When Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, had heard this speech of the endlessly talkative Makarākṣa, he laughed and spoke these words: “In the Daṇḍaka forest, I slaughtered fourteen thousand *rākṣasas*, including Triśiras, Dūṣaṇa, and the one who was your father. Today, evil wretch, the vultures, jackals, and crows with their sharp beaks and fangs and their hooked claws will gorge themselves on your flesh.” When Rāma had addressed him in this fashion, Khara’s son, the night-roaming *rākṣasa*, loosed a torrent of arrows at Rāghava on the battlefield. But Rāma cut those arrows into myriad pieces with a hail of his own arrows. Cut to pieces, the golden-fletched arrows fell to the ground by the thousands.

[22–27] Then the battle between them commenced as the son of the *rākṣasa* Khara and Daśaratha’s son rushed violently toward each other. The sound of their bowstrings striking their armguards was like that of two thunderclouds clashing in the sky. The deafening sound of their bows could then be heard throughout the battlefield. Eager to witness that awesome sight, all the gods, *dānavas*, *gandharvas*, *kinnaras*, and great serpents assembled in the sky. As they pierced each other’s bodies, their strength only redoubled. They both engaged in thrusts and counterthrusts with each other on the battlefield. In that battle, the *rākṣasa* cut down the swarms of arrows loosed by Rāma, while Rāma, for his part, with his arrows cut the

arrows loosed by the *rākṣasa* into myriad pieces. All the cardinal and intermediate directions were filled with torrents of arrows. The earth, covered as well on every side, was no longer visible.

[28–33] In a rage, great-armed Rāghava shattered the *rākṣasa*'s bow. With eight iron arrows he slew the charioteer. Then, after smashing the chariot with his arrows, Rāma cut down the chariot-horses. Robbed of his chariot, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Makarākṣa took his stand on the ground. In his hand, the *rākṣasa* held his lance, which, equal in radiance to the fire that ends a cosmic era, struck terror into all beings. Brandishing that huge and blazing lance, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* hurled it furiously at Rāghava in that great battle. But even as the blazing lance, released from the hand of Khara's son, flew toward him, Rāghava cut it to pieces in the sky with three arrows. Struck by Rāma's arrows, the lance, adorned with heavenly gold, was cut into myriad pieces so that it shattered on the ground, like some great meteor. When the great beings stationed in the sky saw that the lance had been destroyed by Rāma of wondrous deeds, they cried out, "Excellent! Excellent!"

[34–38] When the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Makarākṣa saw that his lance had been destroyed, he raised his fist and cried out to Kākutstha, "Halt! Stay right where you are!" Seeing Makarākṣa rushing toward him, Rāma, the delight of the Raghus, laughed and fitted to his bow the divine weapon of Agni, the purifier. When he was struck by Kākutstha with that divine weapon in battle, the *rākṣasa*, pierced to the heart, collapsed and died. Then, when the *rākṣasas* had witnessed Makarākṣa's fall, they all fled back to Lañkā, harried by Rāma's arrows. Seeing Khara's son, the night-roaming *rākṣasa*, struck down by the force of the arrows of King Daśaratha's son, like a mountain struck by a thunderbolt and shattered, the gods were delighted.

Sarga 67

[1–3] When Rāvaṇa, victorious in battle, heard that Makarākṣa had been slain, he was furious, and he ordered his son Indrajit into battle: "Hero, you must slay those two heroic brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. For whether visible or invisible, you are mightier still in every way. In battle you defeated Indra, whose feats are unmatched. How much more easily will you slay two men when you encounter them in battle?"

[4–9] Addressed in this fashion by the *rākṣasa* lord, Indrajit accepted his father's instructions. Then, in the sacrificial ground, he offered oblations into the purifying sacrificial fire according to the ritual prescriptions. As Rāvaṇi began his oblation into the sacrificial fire, *rākṣasa* women, bearing red turbans, came in haste to where he stood. Weapons served as the *śarapatra* grass, *vibhītaka* wood was the kindling. His garments were red, and his ladle of black iron. Having strewn the fire altar all around on every side with weapons in place of *śarapatra* grass, he seized the throat of a live, pure black goat. When kindled and fed the oblation of rice-gruel, the smokeless fire with its huge flames displayed signs betokening victory. Glowing like burnished gold, his flames swirling in an auspicious clockwise direction, Agni, the purifier, himself rose up and received that oblation.

[10–17] Once he had made his oblations into the sacrificial fire and thus gratified the gods, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas*, Indrajit mounted his excellent and radiant chariot, which could be rendered invisible. [v]Complete with its four horses, its sharp arrows, and a mighty bow fastened in place, that magnificent chariot looked splendid. Blazing with splendor and covered with burnished gold, the chariot was decorated with motifs of arrows, moons, and half-moons. With its device of a great conch of *jāmbūnada* gold, Indrajit's battle standard, adorned with lapis, looked like a blazing fire, purifier of all things. And protected as he was by the divine weapon-spell of Brahmā, as brilliant as the sun, the immensely powerful Rāvaṇi was unassailable. Once he had completed his oblation into the sacrificial fire to the accompaniment of *mantras* peculiar to the *rākṣasas*, Indrajit, victorious in battle and able to render himself invisible, marched forth from the city and said: "This very day, I shall slay in combat those two false forest ascetics and thus give my father a great victory in battle. Once I have cleared the earth of monkeys and slain Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa, I will have given my father the greatest delight." When he had spoken in this fashion, he became invisible.

[18–21] Acting on ten-necked Rāvaṇa's orders, Indrajit, the fierce foe of Indra, in a rage drove swiftly into battle armed with his pitiless bow and iron arrows. He spied the two immensely powerful heroes in the midst of the monkeys. As they prepared to unleash volleys of arrows, they resembled three-headed cobras. With the thought, "There they are!" he strung his bow and inundated them with torrents of arrows, as, with a downpour, might a

storm cloud charged with rain. In his chariot, he flew up into the sky, and, stationing himself there out of the range of sight, he riddled Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with sharp arrows.

[22–26] Beset on every side by the force of his arrows, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa placed arrows on their bows and invoked a divine weapon-spell. Those very mighty warriors, who resembled gods, covered the sky with their volleys of arrows. But their divine weapons did not so much as graze Indrajit. For he had created dense darkness so as to obscure the heavens. Thus did that majestic warrior, shrouded in a murky fog, make it impossible to see in any direction. Not even the sound of his bowstring striking his armguard could be heard or the noise of his chariot wheels and horses' hooves as he darted to and fro. Nor could one discern his form. With his torrent of iron arrows, the great-armed warrior, in that dense and blinding darkness, let loose a veritable and prodigious downpour of arrows.

[27–31] In that battle, the angry Rāvaṇi, who had been granted a boon, completely riddled Rāma in every limb with arrows as radiant as the sun. Although those two tigers among men were pelted with iron arrows like two mountains inundated by torrential rains, they continued to shoot their own sharp gold-fletched arrows. Soaring into the sky, those heron-fletched arrows wounded Rāvaṇi and then fell back to earth, smeared with blood. Although those two splendid men were sorely afflicted by that torrent of arrows, they cut down those shafts as they rained down, with many crescent-headed arrows. The two sons of Daśaratha would loose a splendid divine weapon in any direction from which they saw those sharp arrows raining down.

[32–35] But the great chariot-warrior Rāvaṇi, whose divine weapons flew swiftly, darted in all directions in his chariot and continued to riddle the two sons of Daśaratha with his sharp arrows. Thoroughly riddled by him with those finely made, gold-fletched arrows, the two heroic sons of Daśaratha looked like twin *kiṃśuka* trees covered with crimson blossoms. No one could follow Indrajit's movements, nor could anyone discern his form, his bow, or his arrows. Nothing whatever of his could be discerned, as if he were the sun hidden behind a dense mass of clouds. Pierced through by him, the tawny monkeys were struck down by the hundreds and lay fallen on the ground, robbed of their life breaths.

[36–42] Then, in a towering rage, Lakṣmaṇa said these words to his brother: "I shall use the divine weapon-spell of Brahmā in order to exterminate all the *rākṣasas*." But Rāma said this in reply to Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks: "You must not slaughter all the *rākṣasas* of the earth on account of a single one. A foe who does not resist, is in hiding, cups his hands in supplication, approaches seeking refuge, is fleeing, or is caught off guard—you must not slay any of these. Therefore, mighty warrior, let us strive to slay him alone. Let us summon our divine weapon-spells, which strike with tremendous force and resemble venomous serpents. For if the leaders of the monkey troops could but see that vile master of illusion with his invisible chariot, they could then overpower and slay that *rākṣasa*. Whether he enters the earth, the heavens, the underworld Rasātala, or the sky—no matter where he may hide—he shall fall to earth consumed by my divine weapons and robbed of his life breaths." Thus did the great hero of the Raghus speak, surrounded by those bulls among leaping monkeys. Then the great man urgently began to contemplate how to kill that fierce *rākṣasa* of cruel deeds.

Sarga 68

[1–6] Now, when Indrajit realized what great Rāghava had in mind, he withdrew from the battle and reentered the city. But as that immensely lustrous hero recalled the slaughter of those courageous *rākṣasas*, his eyes grew red with rage and he sallied forth once more. Surrounded by *rākṣasas*, the immensely powerful Indrajit Paulastya, that thorn in the side of the gods, marched forth through the western gate. But then, perceiving that the two heroic brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, were prepared for battle, Indrajit displayed his power of illusion. Placing an illusory Sītā on his chariot in the midst of his vast host, he made as if to kill her. Determined to deceive all of them, that very evil-minded *rākṣasa* marched out right in front of the monkeys, displaying every intention of killing Sītā.

[7–11] When the forest-dwelling monkeys saw him marching forth from the city, they leapt up in a towering rage, with boulders in their hands, eager for battle. Before them strode Hanumān, elephant among monkeys, holding an immense mountain peak that was impossible to withstand. There, in Indrajit's chariot, he saw Sītā. She was sorrowful, wearing a single braid, dejected, her face gaunt with fasting. That splendid woman, Rāghava's

beloved, wore only a single garment, now much worn. She was unwashed so that all her limbs were covered with dust and dirt. After observing her closely for a moment and concluding that she was indeed Maithilī, Hanumān became deeply agitated, his face awash in tears.

[12–15] Seeing poor Sītā there in the chariot, sorrowful and afflicted with grief, in the clutches of the *rākṣasa* lord's son, the great monkey thought, "What does he mean to do?" Then, after voicing this concern, he rushed upon Rāvaṇi together with those excellent monkeys. But when Rāvaṇi spied the monkey host, he was beside himself with rage. Unsheathing his sword, he seized Sītā by the head. Then, right before their eyes, Rāvaṇi struck that woman, whom he had conjured up in his chariot through his power of illusion, as she cried out, "Rāma! Rāma!"

[16–21] When Hanumān saw Sītā seized by her hair, that son of Māruta shed tears born of grief from his eyes. In anger, he spoke harsh words to the son of the *rākṣasa* lord: "Evil wretch! You have seized her braid to your own destruction. Though born in a lineage of brahman-seers you dwelt in a *rākṣasa* woman's womb. Damn you, you creature of foul deeds, whose mind has sunk to this! Savage! Ignoble! Evildoer! Lowest of the low! Criminal! Such is the act of an ignoble creature! You are without pity, pitiless *rākṣasa*! Taken from her home, her country, and the arms of Rāma, what offense has Maithilī done you that you should want to kill her? If you kill Sītā, you will certainly die soon. For through this deed, for which you would deserve to die, you would fall into my clutches. And then, once you have lost your life and passed on to the next world, you will surely obtain those worlds reserved for those who kill women, worlds that are despised even by others who deserve death at the hands of all men."

[22–27] Even as he was speaking in this fashion, Hanumān, surrounded by tawny monkeys wielding weapons, rushed in a rage at the son of the *rākṣasa* lord. But Indrajit, with his army of fearsomely swift *rākṣasas*, drove back the immensely powerful army of forest-dwelling monkeys as it rushed onward. Once he had routed the army of tawny monkeys with a thousand arrows, Indrajit replied to Hanumān, foremost among the tawny monkeys: "This very day, right before your very eyes, I shall kill Vaidehī, on whose account Sugrīva, you, and Rāma have come here. And after I kill her, monkey, I shall then kill Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, you, Sugrīva, and that ignoble Vibhīṣaṇa. Now as to what you said, leaping monkey, 'Women are

not to be killed,' I would respond that one must do whatever causes pain to one's enemies."

[28–33] When he had addressed him in this fashion, Indrajit himself slew the wailing, illusory Sītā with his sharp-edged sword. Hacked in two from her shoulder to her hip, the poor woman, so beautiful and broad-hipped, fell to the ground. After he had killed that woman, Indrajit said to Hanumān: "Now behold Rāma's woman, whom I have slaughtered in my wrath." Then, having slain her himself with his huge sword, Indrajit mounted his chariot in great delight and unleashed a deafening roar. As he withdrew to the safety of his own forces, roaring loudly, his mouth opened wide, the monkeys standing nearby could hear the din. When evil-minded Rāvaṇi had slain Sītā in this fashion, he was delighted at heart. But when the monkeys saw how thoroughly delighted he was, they fled every which way in profound dejection.

Sarga 69

[1–4] When those bulls among monkeys heard that terrifying sound, they fled in all directions, glancing back toward Indrajit, whose roar was like the sound of Śakra's thunderbolt. But as they all scattered, terrified and dejected, their faces downcast, Hanumān, son of Māruta, called out to them: "Leaping monkeys! Why are you fleeing with downcast faces, abandoning your enthusiasm for battle? Where now are all your heroics? Follow close behind me as I advance before you into battle. It ill befits heroes endowed with noble birth to run away."

[5–9] Addressed in this fashion by the wise son of Vāyu, the monkeys were highly indignant. Their minds filled with excitement, they seized mountain peaks and trees. Those bulls among monkeys rushed, roaring, toward the *rākṣasas*. Surrounding Hanumān, they followed him into the great battle. Like fire, eater of oblations, wreathed in flames, Hanumān, surrounded on every side by the principal monkeys, consumed the army of his foes. Surrounded by the monkey host, the great monkey—like Yama, who brings time itself to an end—wrought destruction among the *rākṣasas*. Consumed with grief and rage, the great monkey Hanumān hurled an enormous boulder at Rāvaṇi's chariot.

[10–14] But when the charioteer saw it hurtling toward him, he drove the chariot, drawn by obedient horses, well out of range. Failing in its purpose,

the boulder fell short of Indrajit, who remained in his chariot with his charioteer. It split open the earth and buried itself. But in falling, it wrought havoc among the *rākṣasa* host. Then, roaring, the forest-dwelling monkeys hurled themselves by the hundreds upon Indrajit. Arming themselves, those huge monkeys, fearsome in their valor, hurled trees and mountain peaks into the midst of their enemies. Struck down powerfully with trees by the immensely powerful monkeys, the grotesque night-roaming *rākṣasas* writhed on the battleground.

[15–22] But when Indrajit saw his army being harried by the monkeys, he seized his weapons in a towering rage and rushed at his foes. Surrounded by his own troops, he displayed his valor, releasing torrents of arrows. And he slaughtered many of those tigers among monkeys with lances, darts, swords, spears, mallets, and war hammers. The monkeys, in turn, slew his followers in battle. With *sāla* trees, complete with trunks and branches, and with boulders, immensely powerful Hanumān slaughtered the *rākṣasas* of fearsome deeds. Once he had driven back the enemy army, Hanumān said to the forest-dwelling monkeys: “Withdraw! There is no point in defeating this army, for Janaka’s daughter, on whose account we have been fighting, struggling, and sacrificing our lives to please Rāma, has been slain. Let us first report this matter to Rāma and Sugrīva. Then we shall do whatever they may ordain.” When he had spoken in this fashion, that foremost of monkeys turned back all the monkeys and, calmly and deliberately, withdrew.

[23–26] Now, when Indrajit saw that Hanumān was heading back to where Rāghava waited, he retired to the Nikumbhilā shrine, eager to make oblation to the sacred fire, purifier of all things. The sacred fire, purifier of all things, blazed up fiercely, as, in accordance with the sacrificial injunctions, the *rākṣasa* poured oblations of blood into it there on the sacrificial ground. Glutted with the oblations of blood and swathed in flames, that fierce fire blazed up like the sun at twilight. Then Indrajit, in accordance with the sacrificial injunctions, made oblations according to those injunctions for the success of the *rākṣasas*. And the *rākṣasas*, who knew what was and was not proper conduct, stood around in their vast troops, watching.

Sarga 70

[1–4] Now, when Rāghava heard the deafening noise of the battle between the *rākṣasas* and the forest-dwelling monkeys, he said to Jāmbavān: “My friend, surely Hanumān must have accomplished an all-but-impossible feat, since we hear such a mighty and terrifying clash of arms. Therefore, you should go quickly, lord of the apes, surrounded by your own forces, and render assistance to that foremost of monkeys, who is engaged in battle.” With the words, “So be it,” the king of the apes, surrounded by his own army, proceeded toward the western gate, where the monkey Hanumān was.

[5–9] But then, on the road, the lord of apes encountered Hanumān returning, surrounded by his monkeys, who were fresh from battle and breathing hard. Encountering on the road that fearsome army of apes all ready for battle and resembling a black storm cloud, Hanumān halted it and turned it back. With his army of tawny monkeys, the illustrious Hanumān quickly approached Rāma and, in great sorrow, said these words to him: “While we were engaged in battle, Indrajit, the son of Rāvaṇa, slew the wailing Sītā right before our eyes. When I saw her like that, I was devastated and despondent, tamer of your foes. Then I came straightaway to report this news to you, sir.”

[10–12] Upon hearing those words of his, Rāghava, fainting from grief, fell to the ground, like a tree cut off at the roots. Seeing the godlike Rāghava fallen to the ground, those excellent monkeys leapt up and rushed to him from every side. They doused him with water fragrant with red and blue lotuses, as if he were an unbearable blazing fire that had sprung up.

[13–18] Then Lakṣmaṇa, deeply grieving himself, took the stricken Rāma in his arms and addressed him in words that were both rational and meaningful: “Since the practice of righteousness has been unable to protect you, noble brother—you, who have always trodden the path of virtue and controlled your senses—from calamities, it is truly pointless. For since we cannot directly perceive the force of righteousness in the same way that we perceive moving and fixed objects, it is my opinion that it does not exist. This thing called ‘righteousness’ is not demonstrable in the same way that moving and fixed objects are. Otherwise, a person like you would not experience such suffering. By the same token, if the force of unrighteousness were real, Rāvaṇa would go to hell, while you, sir, who are devoted to righteousness, would not thus suffer calamity. Since he has suffered no calamity, while you are immersed in one, can it be true that one

obtains felicity through the practice of righteousness and that suffering arises from the practice of unrighteousness?

[19–24] "Now, if those people who were averse to unrighteousness would thereby experience the felicity arising from the practice of righteousness, that is, if those who conducted themselves righteously would experience happiness, then they would receive their just deserts. Therefore, since the fortunes of those among whom unrighteousness is practiced increase, while those who always practice righteousness suffer torments, these two concepts are meaningless. And if, Rāghava, it were true that evildoers perish through the force of unrighteousness, then the force of righteousness would also be destroyed by the very act of destruction. Then, once it is destroyed, whom could it harm? Or if we are to understand that it is because of fate that a person is either killed by or kills another, then it is fate alone that would be tainted by that evil act and not the person himself. Since the results of righteousness are imperceptible and it itself is unmanifest and, in fact, unreal, how, tormentor of your foes, would it be possible to attain the highest good by means of it? If there were really such a thing as the power of virtue, then you, foremost among the virtuous, would never have suffered any evil. But since such a calamity has befallen you, it must follow that the power of virtue does not exist.

[25–29] "On the other hand, it may be that the force of righteousness is weak and impotent and is merely auxiliary to manly effort. And since it is weak and blurs all distinctions, it should, in my opinion, be ignored. And if the force of righteousness is merely auxiliary to manly effort when it comes to effective action, then you should abandon it and devote yourself to manly effort, just as you now do to righteousness. Or should it be argued that righteousness consists, as they say, in speaking the truth, scorcher of your foes, then why is it that you would not imprison our father, who acted both untruthfully and cruelly toward you? Moreover, scorcher of your foes, if either righteousness or human effort were to be practiced exclusively, then the wielder of the *vajra*, Indra of the hundred sacrifices, would not first have slain a sage and then performed a sacrifice. When either human effort or righteousness is practiced exclusively, it destroys a person, Rāghava. Therefore, Kākutstha, a man should act as he pleases in all such matters.

[30–38] "Such is righteousness according to my way of thinking, Rāghava, my poor brother. Besides, when you relinquished the kingship,

you cut off righteousness at its root. For all righteous actions flow from wealth that is drawn and amassed from different sources, just as rivers flow from the mountains. But when a man is stripped of his wealth and so becomes powerless, all his righteous actions cease to flow like rivulets in the hot season. And such a man who has been raised to enjoy pleasures will come to crave them. If he should lose his wealth, he will resort to evil deeds. In this way, dire consequences will ensue. A rich man has friends. A rich man has kinsmen. A rich man is an important person in this world. A rich man is considered learned. A rich man is powerful. A rich man is wise. A rich man is highly fortunate. A rich man is endowed with the finest qualities. I have thus laid out for you the disadvantages inherent in relinquishing wealth. I cannot imagine, heroic brother, what led you to such a decision when you abandoned your kingship. A rich man gains righteousness, pleasure, and profit—everything is propitious for him. But a poor man, though he may desire wealth and seek it, can never acquire it. Joy, desire, pride, righteousness, anger, tranquility, and self-restraint: all of these proceed from wealth, lord of men.

[39–42] "Those who wander about practicing righteousness lose everything of value in this world. Those things of value are no more to be seen in you than are the heavenly bodies on stormy days. For, hero, it was when you were living in exile, adhering to your father's word, that the *rākṣasa* stole away your wife, dearer to you than life itself. But this very day, with feats of valor, hero, I shall dispel the great suffering wrought by Indrajit. Therefore, arise, Rāghava! For I have arisen to aid you, sinless brother. In my rage at learning of the murder of Janaka's daughter, I shall, with my arrows, completely level Laṅkā, along with its horses, elephants, and chariots, as well as the lord of the *rākṣasas* himself."

Sarga 71

[1–7] Now, while Lakṣmaṇa, so fond of his brother, was consoling Rāma, Vibhīṣaṇa returned after having stationed the troops at their proper posts. Surrounded by his four valiant ministers, all armed with various weapons and resembling masses of collyrium, he resembled the leader of a herd surrounded by bull elephants. As he drew near, he saw that the great Rāghava was immersed in grief and that the monkeys' eyes were awash with tears. Then he saw the great Rāma Rāghava, delight of the House of

Ikṣvāku, who lay dazed in Lakṣmaṇa's lap. Upon seeing Rāma tormented by grief and deeply chagrined, Vibhīṣaṇa, his heart sinking with an inner sorrow, said, "What's wrong?" Looking first at Vibhīṣaṇa's face, then at Sugrīva and the monkeys, Lakṣmaṇa, overwhelmed with tears, said these words: "Upon hearing Hanumān report that Indrajit had slain Sītā, Rāghava fainted on the spot, dear friend."

[8–12] But Vibhīṣaṇa cut Saumitri off even as he was speaking and said these deeply meaningful words to the barely conscious Rāma: "Lord of men, I think that what Hanumān told you in his despair is as preposterous as would be the drying up of the ocean. For I know full well the plans that the evil-minded Rāvaṇa has for Sītā, great-armed warrior. He would never countenance her murder. Desiring what was best for him, I begged him over and over again, 'You must give up Vaidehī!' But he would not heed that advice. But no one can so much as get a glimpse of her, whether through conciliation, sowing dissension, bribery, or any other means, much less through violence.

[13–15] "After deluding the monkeys, the *rākṣasa* Indrajit has returned to the shrine known as Nikumbhilā, where he will perform a sacrifice. And should that son of Rāvaṇa return after having completed his oblation, he will be unassailable in battle, even by the gods, Vāsava included. He must surely have employed this illusion, dear boy, in his desire to undermine the monkeys' valor. We must go there with our troops before he completes his sacrifice.

[16–22] "So cease this baseless grieving that has overcome you, tiger among men, for when they see you racked with grief, the whole army becomes despondent. You must remain here to compose yourself and recoup your strength. Send Lakṣmaṇa, along with us and the leaders of the troops. For that tiger among men with his sharp arrows will force Rāvaṇi to abandon his sacrifice. Then that *rākṣasa* can be killed. Then his sharp and pitiless feathered shafts, made swift by the feathers of birds, will, like birds of prey themselves, drink Indrajit's blood. Thus, great-armed warrior, you must send forth Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks for the destruction of this *rākṣasa*, just as might Indra, the wielder of the *vajra*, send forth that weapon. Nor, best of men, must there be any delay in regard to killing our enemy. So issue your orders for the destruction of our foe, as does great Indra for the smashing of the citadels of the *asuras*. For if the *rākṣasa* lord

should complete his sacrifice, he would become invisible in battle to the gods and *asuras* alike. Then, having completed his sacrifice, should he wish to fight, even the gods themselves would be in grave peril."

Sarga 72

[1–3] Although Rāghava had heard those words of Vibhīṣaṇa, he could not, racked with grief as he was, clearly understand what the *rākṣasa* had said. But then, in the presence of the monkeys, Rāma, the conqueror of enemy citadels, regaining his composure, spoke to Vibhīṣaṇa, who sat beside him: "Vibhīṣaṇa! Lord of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, I would like to hear once more what you just said. Please repeat what you intended to say."

[4–9] When he had heard those words of Rāghava, Vibhīṣaṇa, skilled in speech, repeated what he had said: "No sooner had you ordered me to station the troops at their proper posts than I executed your command, great-armed hero, just as you said. All the forces have been disposed separately on every side, while the troop leaders have been duly posted with their respective divisions. But please, illustrious hero, listen to my request once more. When you were grieving baselessly, our hearts were filled with grief. So abandon this sorrow, your majesty, this baseless grief that has overcome you. You must give up your brooding, which serves only to delight your enemies. If you are to recover Sītā and slay the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, you must bestir yourself, hero, and lift your spirits.

[10–14] "Listen, delight of the Raghus, to the beneficial advice that I will now give you. Let Saumitri set out directly, accompanied by a large army, in order to confront Rāvaṇi in the Nikumbhilā shrine and kill him in battle. There with arrows—like the venom of venomous serpents—loosed from his full-drawn bow, that mighty bowman, victorious in battle, shall slay Rāvaṇi. Through the boon of self-existent Brahmā, acquired by virtue of his asceticism, that hero will obtain the divine Brahmaśiras weapon-spell and chariot-horses that can take him wherever he desires. But this is the way in which the death of that cunning warrior was foreordained, your majesty: 'Should an enemy ever strike you, enemy of Indra, before you can reach the Nikumbhilā grove and there complete your oblation into the fire, he shall compass your death even as you draw your bow to slay him.' Therefore, Rāma, you must depute mighty Lakṣmaṇa to kill Indrajit. For

once he is slain, you can consider Rāvaṇa and all his companions to be as good as dead."

[15–17] When Rāma had heard these words of Vibhīṣaṇa, he replied: "Well do I know, truly valorous hero, the illusory power of that fierce warrior. For he is cunning and has mastered the divine weapon-spell of Brahmā. He is mighty and mighty is the power of his illusion. Indeed, he can render even the gods themselves, including Varuṇa, unconscious in battle. And when, illustrious hero, mounted in his chariot, he travels through the sky, his movements can no more be discerned than those of the sun behind a dense mass of clouds."

[18–21] Then Rāghava, who knew well the illusory power of his evil-minded foe, said these words to illustrious Lakṣmaṇa: "Lakṣmaṇa! Accompanied by the entire army of the monkey lords and the troop leaders led by Hanumān as well as Jāmbavān, lord of the apes, and his army, you must slay the son of that *rākṣasa*, skilled though he may be in the power of illusion. And Vibhīṣaṇa, the great night-roaming *rākṣasa*, who knows this country intimately, will bring up the rear together with his ministers."

[22–25] When Lakṣmaṇa, of fearsome valor, who was accompanied by Vibhīṣaṇa, heard these words of Rāghava, he took up a superb and extraordinary bow. Girded for battle with his armor, sword, arrows, and golden bow, Saumitri touched Rāma's feet and spoke in great excitement: "This very day, arrows loosed from my bow will pierce Rāvaṇi and then plunge into Laṅkā, as do *haṃsas* into a lotus pond. Indeed, this very day, my arrows, flying from the bowstring of my mighty bow, will strike that fierce warrior and tear his body to pieces."

[26–30] When he had spoken in this fashion in the presence of his brother, glorious Lakṣmaṇa departed in haste, eager to slay Rāvaṇi. Then, having made his obeisance to his elder brother's feet and having circled him reverentially, he set out for Nikumbhilā, the shrine guarded by Rāvaṇi. His mission blessed by his brother, the valorous prince hastened on his way, accompanied by Vibhīṣaṇa. Then Hanumān, surrounded by many thousands of monkeys, and Vibhīṣaṇa, together with his ministers, followed Lakṣmaṇa. Accompanied by a vast army of tawny monkeys, Lakṣmaṇa quickly encountered the army of Jāmbavān, king of the apes, which was stationed along the way.

[31–33] After he had traveled a long way, Saumitri, delight of his friends, spied in the distance the army of the *rākṣasa* lord, which was drawn up in battle array. When the delight of the Raghus, tamer of his foes, had thus encountered that master of illusion Indrajit, he took his stand, bow in hand, in order to triumph according to the decree of Brahmā. Then he plunged into the army of his enemies as into a vast darkness. It was diverse and gleamed with shining weapons. It was thick with battle standards and abounded in great chariot-warriors. In the immeasurable force of its onset, it was utterly terrifying.

Sarga 73

[1–5] Now, at this critical juncture, Rāvaṇa's younger brother Vibhīṣaṇa addressed Lakṣmaṇa in words that were inimical to their enemies and instrumental to the achievement of their own ends: "Lakṣmaṇa, you must make every effort to annihilate this vast army. For once it has been annihilated, the son of the *rākṣasa* lord will become visible. Showering your enemies with arrows like Indra's thunderbolts, you must attack at once while his sacrifice is not yet completed. Hero, you must slay evil-minded Rāvaṇi, so unrighteous and adept in the power of illusion, for he is cruel in his actions and a terror to all the worlds." Upon hearing these words of Vibhīṣaṇa, Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks unleashed a hail of arrows in the direction of the *rākṣasa* lord's son.

[6–12] Meanwhile, the apes and tree-dwelling monkeys, armed with huge trees and mountains, together hurled themselves upon the army that stood before them. The *rākṣasas*, for their part, eager to annihilate the monkey host, fought back with sharp arrows, swords, and with upraised javelins and iron cudgels. And thus a tumultuous clash of arms took place between the monkeys and the *rākṣasas*, which, with its colossal din, caused Laṅkā to reverberate on every side. The very sky itself was hidden from view by weapons of many different kinds: sharp arrows, trees, and fearsome, upraised mountain peaks. Hurling their weapons at the monkeys, the *rākṣasas*, with their deformed faces and arms, sowed immense panic among them. By the same token, the monkeys struck and slaughtered the bulls among *rākṣasas* in battle with whole trees and mountain peaks. Immense panic broke out among the *rākṣasas* as they were being

slaughtered by the huge and immensely powerful leaders of the apes and monkeys.

[13–16] When unassailable Indrajit learned that his army was demoralized and afflicted by the enemy, he rose up, his sacrifice still incomplete. Emerging from the shadow of the trees, the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇi, in a rage, mounted his chariot, which stood fully equipped and already yoked. Resembling a mass of black collyrium, his eyes and face an angry red, that cruel *rākṣasa* with his fearsome bow and arrows looked like Mṛtyu himself, the ender of all things. As soon as the army of the *rākṣasas*—fearsome in their onslaught and eager to fight with Lakṣmaṇa—saw Indrajit mounted in his chariot, they surrounded him.

[17–20] But at that moment, Hanumān, that tamer of his foes, who resembled a mountain, took up a huge and unstoppable tree and, with it, tore through the *rākṣasa* ranks like the fire of universal destruction. And in that battle, the monkey knocked them unconscious with many trees. When they saw that Hanumān, son of Pavana, was wreaking swift destruction upon them, thousands of *rākṣasas* unleashed a hail of weapons toward him—bearers of sharp lances assailed him with their lances, swordsmen with their swords, javelin-wielders with their javelins, and spearmen with their spears.

[21–24] Besetting the mountainous monkey on every side, the *rākṣasas* belabored him with iron clubs, maces, splendid-looking barbed darts, hundreds of hundred-slayers, iron war hammers, fearsome battle-axes, short javelins, fists with the force of the *vajra*, and palms like thunderbolts. Meanwhile, Hanumān, in a towering rage, wrought great slaughter among them. Indrajit saw that Pavana's mountainous son, the foremost of monkeys, Hanumān, destroyer of his enemies, was slaughtering his enemies.

[25–27] Indrajit then said to his charioteer, "Drive to where that monkey is, for if we do not deal with him, he will surely destroy us *rākṣasas*." When he had been addressed by him in this fashion, the charioteer drove to where Māruti was, conveying the utterly invincible Indrajit, mounted in the chariot. Closing in, the invincible *rākṣasa* unleashed upon the monkey's head a hail of arrows, swords, spears, scimitars, and battle-axes.

[28–34] But Māruti, parrying those fearsome weapons, was seized with a towering rage and spoke these words: "Come and fight if you are such a

hero, evil-minded son of Rāvaṇa! Having now encountered Vāyu's son, you will not escape with your life. If you want to engage me in single combat in this battle, then fight me with your bare hands. If you can sustain my crushing force, evil-minded wretch, then you will prove to be the best of the *rākṣasas*." But just then Vibhīṣaṇa informed Lakṣmaṇa that Indrajit, the son of Rāvaṇa, intent on killing Hanumān, had taken up his bow: "Rāvaṇa's son, the conqueror of Vāsava, intent on killing Hanumān, has now mounted his chariot. Saumitri, you must slay Rāvaṇi with your fearsome, foe-piercing arrows, incomparable in their workmanship and utterly lethal." Addressed in this fashion by that terror to his foes, Vibhīṣaṇa, great Lakṣmaṇa spied the unassailable Indrajit of fearsome power, resembling a mountain and mounted in his chariot.

Sarga 74

[1–6] After addressing Saumitri in this fashion, Vibhīṣaṇa, in great excitement, took him, still armed with his bow, and swiftly advanced. Proceeding for a short distance, Vibhīṣaṇa entered a vast grove and there pointed out to Lakṣmaṇa the sacrificial ground. There Rāvaṇa's powerful brother pointed out to Lakṣmaṇa a fearsome-looking banyan tree that resembled a black storm cloud: "It is only after offering oblations to malignant spirits at this spot that the mighty son of Rāvaṇa goes forth to battle. Then the *rākṣasa* becomes invisible to all creatures and is able to bind and slay his enemies in battle with his splendid arrows. Therefore, with your keen arrows, you must destroy the mighty son of Rāvaṇa, together with his chariot, horses, and charioteer, before he returns to that banyan tree."

[7–9] With the words, "So be it," immensely powerful Saumitri, delight of his friends, took up his stand there, twanging his splendid bow. At that, Indrajit, Rāvaṇa's mighty son, appeared in his flame-colored chariot with his armor, sword, and battle standard. Then immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa addressed the invincible Paulastya: "I challenge you to a duel. Give me a fair fight."

[10–16] Although the resolute and immensely powerful son of Rāvaṇa had been challenged in this fashion, he turned his gaze to Vibhīṣaṇa and spoke these bitter words: "Born and bred in our House, you are the very brother of my father. How then, *rākṣasa*, can you, my own uncle, betray

me, your son? You evil-minded defiler of righteousness! You have no sense of kinship, affection, loyalty to your kind, sound judgment, fraternal feeling, or righteousness. You are truly pathetic, you evil-minded wretch, and an object of contempt to the virtuous since, abandoning your own kind, you have chosen to serve our enemies. With your feeble wits you do not perceive this glaring difference. How can one even compare life with one's own kinfolk to despicable servitude to one's enemy? Even if one's enemy is virtuous and one's kinfolk devoid of every virtue, still one's kinfolk, devoid of virtue though they be, are to be preferred. An enemy is always an enemy. No kinsman other than you, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, could demonstrate such pitilessness and callousness as you have, younger brother of Rāvaṇa."

[17–23] When Vibhīṣaṇa had been addressed in this fashion by his brother's son, he replied: "Why do you disparage me, *rākṣasa*, as if you knew nothing of my character? Vicious son of the *rākṣasa* lord, cease your impudent speech out of respect for me. Although I was born in the race of savage *rākṣasas*, my nature is not that of the *rākṣasas*. Instead, I share the better nature of virtuous men. I take delight in neither cruelty nor unrighteousness. Otherwise, how could a brother, even one of radically different character, reject his brother? There are three faults that lead one to ruin: theft of another's property, raping another man's wife, and excessive distrust of one's friends. My brother's horrific murder of the great seers, his warring with all the gods, his arrogance, his wrathfulness, his unremitting hostility, and his perversity—these crimes and defects of his, so threatening to his life and his rule, obscure his virtues, as do storm clouds a mountain. It is because of these crimes and defects that I have forsaken my brother, your father. Neither you nor your father nor the city of Laṅkā shall long endure.

[24–27] "You are an arrogant and ill-disciplined whelp, *rākṣasa*! Say what you will about me; you are bound by the noose of Kāla. Your death is at hand this very day. What can you say to me now? Lowest of the *rākṣasas*, you will never make it back to that banyan tree. If you confront the two Kākutsthas in battle, you will not escape with your life. And now you must do battle with Prince Lakṣmaṇa. Once you are slain, you will accomplish the purpose of the gods in the abode of Yama. So demonstrate all the power you can muster. Discharge all your weapons and arrows. But once you come within the range of Lakṣmaṇa's shafts, you and your army will not escape with your lives."

Sarga 75

[1–8] When Rāvaṇi had heard these words of Vibhīṣaṇa, he was beside himself with rage. He replied in harsh words and swiftly rushed forward. Standing in his huge and ornate chariot yoked to black steeds, with his sword and other weapons raised, he resembled Kāla, the ender of all things. Taking up his broad and thick bow, so firm, fearsome, and powerful, and fingering his foe-destroying arrows, he spoke in his fury to Saumitri, Vibhīṣaṇa, and the tigers among monkeys, saying: “Behold my valor! Now try to ward off in battle the irresistible hail of arrows loosed from my bow, like a torrential downpour from the sky. This very day, my arrows, loosed from my immense bow, will scatter your limbs, as the wind might a heap of straw. I shall send you all this very day to the abode of Yama, your bodies mangled by sharp arrows, lances, javelins, broadswords, and iron cudgels. For who can stand before me in battle when, like a thundering storm cloud, I release a hail of arrows with my deft hands?”

[9–13] When Lakṣmaṇa heard the boasting of the *rākṣasa* lord, his face displayed not the slightest sign of fear. But he was enraged, and he said these words to Rāvaṇi: “The fulfillment of the goals of which you boast is not so easy to accomplish, *rākṣasa*. He alone is truly wise who fulfills his goals through action. You are utterly incapable of accomplishing this feat. In fact, no one can accomplish it. Yet after merely boasting about it, fool, you think, ‘I have accomplished my purpose!’ As for what you accomplished in battle on that other occasion by making yourself invisible, that is the way of thieves. It is not to be followed by heroes. So now that I am standing here, *rākṣasa*, within range of your arrows, go ahead and show us your martial prowess. Why boast with mere words?”

[14–17] Addressed in this fashion, immensely powerful Indrajit, victorious in battle, drew his fearsome bow and let fly sharp arrows. Once launched, those arrows, venomous as serpents, reached Lakṣmaṇa and cascaded upon him with their tremendous striking force, like hissing serpents. With those arrows, exceedingly powerful in their striking force, Rāvaṇa’s son Indrajit, whose own striking force was great, pierced Saumitri of auspicious marks in battle. Drenched in blood, his body riddled with arrows, majestic Lakṣmaṇa resembled a smokeless fire.

[18–22] When Indrajit saw what he had done, he drew near and, letting out a tremendous roar, uttered these words: “Now, Saumitri, lethal arrows—

sharp edged and well fletched—loosed from my bow will rob you of your life. Soon, Lakṣmaṇa, packs of jackals, vultures, and swarms of kites will descend upon you as you lie lifeless, slain by me. This very day, the supremely evil-minded and ever ignoble Rāma, a warrior in name only, will see you, his brother and devotee, slain by me. Yes, he will soon see you sprawled on the ground, Saumitri, slain by me, your armor cut to pieces, your bow smashed, and your head severed."

[23–26] But as Rāvaṇa's son was speaking these harsh words in such a frenzy, Lakṣmaṇa responded to him with words that were perfectly reasonable: "Why do you boast, *rākṣasa*, when you have accomplished no feat? You must perform some feat through which I may come to believe your boasting. Observe, man-eater! Without uttering any harsh speech, any word of censure, and without boasting, I am going to kill you." When he had spoken in this fashion, Lakṣmaṇa sank five arrows of tremendous striking force—iron arrows drawn fully back to his ear—into the *rākṣasa*'s chest.

[27–33] Enraged at being struck by Lakṣmaṇa with those arrows, Rāvaṇa's son pierced him in return with three well-aimed arrows. And thus ensued an immensely fearsome and tumultuous clash in battle between those two lions—man and *rākṣasa*—each eager to kill the other. For both were endowed with might, both were valorous, both were extremely heroic, and both were skilled in every weapon and divine weapon-spell. Both were supremely invincible and unequaled in their power and blazing energy. The two great heroes clashed like two planets in the heavens. For then the two great warriors, as unassailable as Bala and Vṛtra, fought like a pair of lions. Discharging many torrents of arrows, the two lions—man and *rākṣasa*—continued fighting in great excitement. Like two great storm clouds, the two champions—man and *rākṣasa*—bows and arrows in hand and both eager for victory, inundated each other in high excitement with torrents and hails of arrows.

Sarga 76

[1–4] Then, hissing like an angry serpent, Dāśarathi, tormentor of his foes, fitted an arrow to his bow and released it toward the *rākṣasa* lord. When the son of Rāvaṇa heard the slapping of the bowstring against Lakṣmaṇa's armguard, his face went pale, and he stared at him. Meanwhile, Vibhīṣaṇa,

observing the downcast face of the *rākṣasa*, son of Rāvaṇa, addressed Saumitri, who was absorbed in battle: "I perceive unpropitious signs on the person of this son of Rāvaṇa. Therefore, you must make haste, great-armed warrior, for he is doubtless broken."

[5–7] Then Saumitri nocked sharp arrows, like flames of fire or serpents engorged with venom, and let them fly. Struck by Lakṣmaṇa with those arrows, whose impact was like that of Śakra's thunderbolt, Indrajit was momentarily stunned, all his senses wildly disordered. But he regained consciousness after a moment. And his senses fully restored, that hero stared at Daśaratha's heroic son who stood before him.

[8–14] His eyes red with rage, Indrajit advanced upon Saumitri, and, as he drew near, he once again addressed him in harsh words: "Have you completely forgotten my prowess in our first encounter, when, in battle, you and your brother writhed in bondage? That first time, during the great battle, the two of you and your followers were struck to the ground unconscious by my arrows, which are like the thunderbolts of Śakra. So since you dare to attack me, I think that you either must have forgotten that or else, clearly, you desire to depart for the abode of Yama. If you failed to observe my prowess in that first encounter, I will demonstrate it for you today. Now stand your ground!" And so saying, Indrajit pierced Lakṣmaṇa with seven arrows and Hanumān with ten splendid, sharp-edged shafts. Then, his frenzy redoubled in his fury, that powerful warrior pierced Vibhīṣaṇa with one hundred well-aimed arrows.

[15–20] But when Rāma's younger brother had witnessed this feat performed by Indrajit, he dismissed it with a laugh, saying, "That's nothing!" Then Lakṣmaṇa, bull among men, his face betraying not the slightest sign of fear, took up fearsome arrows and, in battle, loosed them angrily at Indrajit Rāvaṇi, saying: "This is not the way heroes engaged in battle strike their blows, night-roaming *rākṣasa*. These arrows of yours are inconsequential and have little force. Indeed, they feel quite pleasant. No, this is not the way heroes fight if they desire victory in battle." And speaking in this fashion, he showered him with hails of arrows. Smashed by his arrows, Indrajit's armor, all adorned with gold, shattered across the chariot floor, like a constellation falling from the sky. His armor torn away, heroic Indrajit was wounded with iron arrows, so that he resembled a mountain bristling with trees.

[21–25] Breathing hard, they fought incessantly and savagely in that battle, pierced with arrows in every limb and completely drenched with blood. Deploying their divine weapon-spells again and again, those two, foremost among those expert in divine weapon-spells, filled the sky with arrows of every size and shape. Both man and *rākṣasa*, shooting flawlessly, swiftly, marvelously, and accurately, continued their fearsome and tumultuous conflict. Each terrifying crash of their bowstrings against their armguards was like that of two fearsome storm clouds thundering in the heavens. The golden-fletched arrows struck their bodies only to emerge smeared with blood and plunge into the ground.

[26–34] Meanwhile, some of their arrows were intercepted in the air by other well-honed weapons. They smashed and splintered one another by the thousands. During the struggle, a ghastly carpet of arrows formed around them, so that it looked like a carpet of *kuśa* grass around two blazing fires at a sacrificial session. Covered with wounds, the bodies of those two great warriors were as resplendent as a *śālmali* and a *kiṃśuka* tree in full bloom in the forest before their leaves appear. Tumultuously and gruesomely the two of them—Indrajit and Lakṣmaṇa—clashed again and again, each eager to vanquish the other. Although they continued to strike at each other—Lakṣmaṇa, Rāvaṇi, and Rāvaṇi, Lakṣmaṇa—neither of them grew weary in that battle. With the masses of arrows deeply rooted yet protruding from their bodies, the two powerful and mighty heroes looked like twin mountains bristling with trees. Drenched with blood and completely covered with arrows, all their limbs resembled blazing fires. A long time elapsed while they were thus engaged in combat, but neither of them turned his face from combat or felt any weariness. At that moment, immensely powerful Vibhīṣaṇa joined the fray and took his stand in order to aid and comfort Lakṣmaṇa, unconquered in the forefront of battle, and to give him respite from the fatigue of combat.

Sarga 77

[1–5] Rāvaṇa's brother, the heroic Vibhīṣaṇa, then took up his position in the front line of battle, watching the two of them—man and *rākṣasa*—who were locked in combat. He twanged his great bow as he took up his stance and then shot huge, keen-tipped arrows at the *rākṣasas*. Those arrows, glowing like fire, fell thick and fast. They tore the *rākṣasas* to pieces, as

thunderbolts might great mountains. Vibhīṣaṇa's followers as well, those outstanding *rākṣasas*, cut down the heroic *rākṣasas* in combat with lances, swords, and spears. Surrounded by those *rākṣasas*, Vibhīṣaṇa then resembled a great bull elephant in the midst of its excited calves.

[6–14] Then, at the appropriate time, that foremost of *rākṣasas*, who well understood timing, said these words, urging on the tawny monkeys, who took pleasure in battling the *rākṣasas*: "Indrajit alone is, as it were, the last hope of the *rākṣasa* lord, and this is the mere remnant of his forces. What are you waiting for, lords of the tawny monkeys? Once this evil *rākṣasa* is slain in the forefront of battle, then, with the exception of Rāvaṇa himself, the enemy forces will have been destroyed. In slaying so many mighty *rākṣasa* chiefs—the loyal hero Prahasta, immensely powerful Nikumbha, Kumbhakarṇa, Kumbha, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Dhūmrākṣa, Akampana, Supārśva, the *rākṣasa* Cakramālin, Kampana, Devāntaka, Narāntaka, and other mighty foes—you have crossed the ocean with your bare hands. You need now only hop across a small puddle. He is the only one left here for you to conquer, monkeys. All the other *rākṣasas* who joined battle here, arrogant in their strength, have been slain. True, it is not right for someone like me, who is like a father to him, to kill one who is like my own son. Still, for Rāma's sake, I must put all pity aside and compass the death of my brother's son. But although I would like to kill him, tears cloud my vision. Therefore, it is great-armed Lakṣmaṇa who will have to finish him off. Now let the monkeys form up their ranks and slaughter his retainers, who have clustered around him."

[15–21] Urged on in this fashion by the very illustrious *rākṣasa*, the monkey lords were roused to a frenzy and beat their tails against the ground. Then, roaring again and again, those tigers among monkeys unleashed various screeches, as peacocks do when they see storm clouds. Then Jāmbavān, surrounded by all his troops, assailed the *rākṣasas* with boulders, claws, and teeth. But those immensely powerful *rākṣasas*, casting aside their fear and wielding all kinds of weapons, surrounded the lord of the apes even as he attacked them. They belabored Jāmbavān in battle with arrows, keen battle-axes, spears, and iron cudgels even as he was slaughtering the *rākṣasa* army. A tumultuous clash then ensued between the monkeys and the *rākṣasas*. It was as fearsome and deafening as the clash between the gods and *asuras* in their fury. And Hanumān too, in a rage,

ripped up a *sāla* tree from the mountain and, advancing to the attack, slaughtered the *rākṣasas* by the thousands.

[22–28] Then, after having engaged in a tumultuous struggle with his paternal uncle Vibhīṣaṇa in that battle, Indrajit charged once again at Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes. Then those two heroes, Lakṣmaṇa and the *rākṣasa*, violently engaged in battle, struck at each other, raining torrents of arrows. The two swift and immensely powerful archers were concealed from view, again and again, by swarms of arrows, just as are the sun and moon by storm clouds at summer's end. Such was the dexterity of their hands as they fought that one could not perceive them taking up their arrows, nocking them, grasping their bows, releasing their arrows, drawing back the bowstrings, taking up their stances, tightly gripping their weapons, or striking their marks. Since the sky was completely covered in every direction with swarms of arrows sent flying by the force of their bows, nothing could be seen. A great and utterly terrifying darkness engulfed everything. The wind ceased to blow, and fire, the purifier, ceased to burn. The great seers muttered, "Heaven help us!" while the *gandharvas* and the celestial bards came and gathered at that place.

[29–32] With four arrows Saumitri pierced the four black, gold-ornamented horses of that lion among *rākṣasas*. Then, with yet another shaft, a crescent-headed arrow, the majestic Rāghava deftly severed the head from the body of the charioteer as he drove back and forth. Now, when the son of Rāvaṇa saw that his charioteer had been slain in combat, he lost his enthusiasm for battle and became dejected. And when the troop leaders of the tawny monkeys saw the *rākṣasa* with his dejected face, they were supremely delighted, and they honored Lakṣmaṇa.

[33–38] Then four lords of the tawny monkeys—Pramāthin, Śarabha, Rabhasa, and Gandhamādana—unable to hold themselves back, launched a violent assault. Leaping swiftly upward, the four immensely powerful monkeys, terrifying in their valor, landed on Indrajit's splendid horses. Blood gushed visibly from the mouths of the horses as those monkeys, huge as mountains, came crashing down upon them. Having slain his horses, they smashed his great chariot. Then, swiftly leaping back, they stood once more at Lakṣmaṇa's side. But Rāvaṇi, leaping down from his chariot—its horses slain, its charioteer slaughtered—assailed Saumitri with a hail of arrows. [w]Then, with masses of arrows—and sharp and splendid arrows they were—

Lakṣmaṇa, the equal of great Indra, forcefully warded him off, who was now on foot and was releasing sharp and splendid arrows in battle.

Sarga 78

[1–5] His horses slain, the enormously powerful night-roaming *rākṣasa* Indrajit now stood on the ground. In his towering rage, he blazed with energy. Wholly intent on killing each other with their arrows for the sake of victory, the two bowmen charged at each other like two bull elephants in the forest. Meanwhile, the *rākṣasas* and the forest-dwelling monkeys raced back and forth in battle, slaughtering one another. Yet they never abandoned their respective masters. Then, taking aim at Lakṣmaṇa and relying on his unsurpassed dexterity, Indrajit unleashed torrents of arrows, as does Indra, smasher of citadels, torrents of rain. But Lakṣmaṇa calmly parried that all-but-unstoppable torrent of arrows unleashed by Indrajit.

[6–12] Realizing that Lakṣmaṇa's armor was impenetrable, Indrajit, son of Rāvaṇa, in a towering rage, shot him in the forehead with three well-fletched arrows, thus demonstrating his extraordinary swiftness in releasing divine weapons. With those arrows planted in his forehead, there in the forefront of battle, the delight of the Raghus, who delighted in battle, looked as splendid as a mountain with three summits. Although the *rākṣasa* had thus pierced him with arrows in the great battle, Lakṣmaṇa nonetheless swiftly pierced him in turn with five arrows. And thus did the two heroes, Lakṣmaṇa and Indrajit, armed with their immensely powerful bows and fearsome in their valor, strike each other with sharp arrows. Charging toward each other, the two bowmen, their hearts set on victory, pierced each other in every limb with fearsome arrows. But Vibhīṣaṇa, still further enraged at Indrajit, whose horses had been slain, shot him through the chest with five arrows that struck with the force of thunderbolts. Flying straight to their mark, those gold-fletched arrows pierced his body. Smeared with his blood, they resembled huge red serpents.

[13–18] Then immensely powerful Indrajit, enraged at his uncle there in the midst of the *rākṣasas*, took up a splendid arrow that had been given to him by Yama. But when immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa, fearsome in his valor, saw him nock that great arrow, he took up another arrow. It had been granted to him in a dream by immeasurable Kubera himself. It was invincible and impossible to withstand even for the gods and *asuras*, Indra

included. Fixed to their splendid bows and drawn back by those heroes, the two magnificent arrows blazed brightly in their splendor. Released from their bows, the two arrows lit up the heavens. They struck each other head on, colliding with tremendous force. Colliding with each other in battle like two great planets, the arrows fell to the ground, shattered into a hundred pieces.

[19–23] Seeing their arrows thwarted there in the forefront of battle, both Lakṣmaṇa and Indrajit were filled with shame and rage. Then, in a towering rage, Saumitri took up the divine weapon of Varuṇa, while the conqueror of great Indra, standing firm in battle, loosed the divine weapon of Rudra. Then a tumultuous and wondrous battle took place between the two of them. Hovering in the sky, the supernatural beings surrounded Lakṣmaṇa. As that fearsome battle, with its terrifying roar, raged on between the monkeys and the *rākṣasas*, the sky was completely filled with numerous supernatural beings, all wonderstruck. The seers, the ancestors, the gods, and the *gandharvas* along with the great birds and the great serpents, placing Indra of the hundred sacrifices at their head, watched over Lakṣmaṇa in battle.

[24–27] And now, Rāghava's heroic younger brother nocked yet another arrow, the greatest of all. It struck with the burning force of fire, eater of oblations, and was capable of piercing Rāvaṇa's son. It was beautifully fletched and its shaft was tapered with smooth joints. Finely crafted and adorned with gold, it was a lethal arrow, impossible either to ward off or to withstand. The terror of the *rākṣasas*, it was like the venom of venomous serpents, and it was worshiped by the hosts of gods. This was the very arrow with which, long ago, the immensely powerful and heroic Lord Śakra of the bay steeds had defeated the *dānavas* during the war of the gods and *asuras*.

[28–31] Then Saumitri, foremost of men, placed upon his foremost of bows that foremost of arrows, the divine weapon of Indra, which had never known defeat in battle. Nocking that foe-destroying, divine weapon, the unassailable Lakṣmaṇa drew his well-strung bow, stretching it to its limit, like Kāla himself at the destruction of the world. Once he had placed the arrow on his splendid bow, fortunate Lakṣmaṇa, drawing it back, uttered these words in order to accomplish his purpose: "If Rāma, the son of

Daśaratha, be righteous, true to his word, and unrivaled in manly valor, then may you slay Rāvaṇi."

[32–37] When he had spoken in this fashion, fortunate Lakṣmaṇa, heroic slayer of enemy heroes, drew that straight-flying arrow back to his ear. Then, charging it with the weapon-spell of Indra, he shot it at Indrajit in battle. It severed Indrajit's majestic head—with its helmet and blazing earrings—from his body, before falling to the ground. Lying on the ground, drenched with blood, severed from his shoulders, the huge head of the *rākṣasa*'s son looked like burnished gold. Slain in this fashion, the son of Rāvaṇa collapsed instantly, sprawling on the ground, along with his armor, helmet, and bow. Now, once Indrajit was slain, all the monkeys along with Vibhīṣaṇa raised a shout, rejoicing, as did the gods at the death of Vṛtra. Then in the heavens there arose a mighty shout on the part of the great seers and all beings, including the *gandharvas* and *apsarases*.

[38–42] Realizing that their champion had fallen, the vast *rākṣasa* host fled in all directions, being slaughtered by the tawny monkeys, who now had a victorious air. Being slaughtered by the monkeys, all the *rākṣasas* dropped their weapons and ran, dazed, toward Laṅkā. In their panic, all the *rākṣasas* fled by the hundreds in many directions, abandoning their weapons—spears, swords, and battle-axes. Some, harried by the monkeys and terrified, entered Laṅkā. Some threw themselves into the sea, while others took refuge on the mountain. Of the thousands of *rākṣasas* who had seen Indrajit slain and lying on the battlefield, not a single one was to be found.

[43–48] Once Indrajit had fallen, the *rākṣasas* vanished in all directions, just as do the solar rays when the sun has set behind the western mountain. Like the sun when its rays grow faint, or fire, the purifier, when it dies out, that warrior of immense blazing energy lay there, stripped of life, his limbs sprawling. Then, once the son of the *rākṣasa* lord had fallen, the world—its enemy destroyed, its oppression nearly at an end—was filled with joy. And Lord Śakra himself, along with all the bulls among the gods, was delighted when that *rākṣasa* of evil deeds was slain. The waters and the heavens became limpid and the *daityas* and *dānavas* assembled and rejoiced when that terror to all the worlds had fallen. And all the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* together cried, "May the brahmans now move about free from anxiety, their impurities removed."

[49–54] Then, seeing that warrior of unrivaled strength, a bull among *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, slain in battle, the delighted leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys rejoiced. And Vibhīṣaṇa, Hanumān, and Jāmbavān, the troop leader of the apes, praising Lakṣmaṇa, rejoiced as well in his victory. Their goal obtained, the leaping monkeys pressed close around that scion of the Raghus and stood there, roaring, howling, and bellowing. Beating their tails on the ground and clapping their upper arms, the monkeys raised a shout, "Lakṣmaṇa has triumphed!" Their hearts delighted, the monkeys, great and small, embraced one another as they chattered about Rāghava's exploits. When his dear friends had witnessed Lakṣmaṇa's all-but-impossible feat in battle, they were delighted. And the gods, seeing that Indra's foe had been slain, felt in their hearts the greatest delight.

Sarga 79

[1–5] When Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks, his body drenched with blood, had slain in battle the conqueror of Śakra, he was delighted. Then mighty and immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa, taking Jāmbavān, Hanumān, and all the forest-dwelling monkeys with him, went straightaway, leaning on Vibhīṣaṇa and Hanumān, to where Sugrīva and Rāghava waited. Approaching Rāma, Saumitri greeted him respectfully and stood there at his brother's side, as might Viṣṇu, Indra's younger brother, at the side of his brother, Śakra. That hero then reported to him the horrific slaughter of Indrajit. Then Vibhīṣaṇa, in delight, told Rāma that great Lakṣmaṇa had cut off Rāvaṇi's head.

[6–9] The bull among men, Rāma, took Lakṣmaṇa on his lap and embraced him tightly. He kissed him on the head and, swiftly stroking him again and again, he spoke these words, comforting him: "You, who can accomplish all-but-impossible deeds, have performed a supremely auspicious feat. Today, I have been freed from my enemy. Surely Rāvaṇa himself will now come forth with a vast array of troops, once he learns that his son has been struck down. And then, surrounded by my own vast army, I shall kill the lord of the *rākṣasas*, so difficult to defeat, as he marches forth, burning with grief at the slaying of his son. Lakṣmaṇa, now that you, my guardian, have slain the conqueror of Śakra, both Sītā and the earth itself have been placed within my grasp."

[10–12] Having thus embraced and comforted his brother, Rāma Rāghava, delighted, spoke these words, addressing Suṣeṇa: "Wise Saumitri, so loving of his friends, is still riddled with darts. You must act in such a way that he is restored to health. You must immediately rid Saumitri and Vibhīṣaṇa of these arrows. And you must assiduously heal the others among the heroic ape and monkey troops—who fight with trees—who were wounded and pierced with darts as they fought."

[13–18] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, Suṣeṇa, the great troop leader of the tawny monkeys, held a powerful medicinal herb to Lakṣmaṇa's nose. The moment he smelled its fragrance, the arrows fell away from him, his pain subsided, and his wounds healed over. At Rāghava's command, Suṣeṇa treated his comrades, starting with Vibhīṣaṇa, as well as all the monkey leaders. Saumitri was instantly restored to his normal state. The darts were removed, his fever had subsided, and he was free of pain and in good spirits. Then, when they saw Saumitri rise up restored to health and in good spirits, Rāma, along with Sugrīva, the lord of the leaping monkeys, Vibhīṣaṇa, and Jāmbavān, lord of the apes, rejoiced together with their troops for a long time. Great Dāśarathi praised Lakṣmaṇa's all-but-impossible feat, while the foremost of the troop leaders were delighted upon hearing that the conqueror of Śakra had fallen in battle.

Sarga 80

[1–3] Upon hearing that Indrajit had been slain, the ministers of ten-necked Paulastya confirmed the news for themselves and then, in great distress, reported it to him: "Great and glorious king! With Vibhīṣaṇa's help, Lakṣmaṇa has slain your son in battle right before our eyes. Encountering another heroic warrior, that heroic warrior who was unvanquished in battle, your heroic son, the conqueror of the lord of the all-wise gods, has been slain by Lakṣmaṇa."

[4–9] When he heard about the grievous, terrible, and horrifying death of his son Indrajit in battle, he fell into a profound stupor. Regaining his wits after a long time, the king, that bull among *rākṣasas*, was overwhelmed with grief for his son. Despondent, his senses reeling, he gave way to lamentation: "Alas, my dear child! Leader of the *rākṣasa* host! Great chariot-warrior! How could you, who had conquered Indra, have succumbed this day to the power of Lakṣmaṇa? When roused to anger in

battle, you could surely, with your arrows, have cut to pieces even Kāla or Yama, the ender of all things, or even the peaks of Mount Mandara. What then to speak of Lakṣmaṇa? Today King Vaivasvata has risen greatly in my estimation. For he has now brought you, great-armed warrior, under the power of time. This is the way of brave warriors, even among all the hosts of the immortal gods. A man who gives up his life for his lord attains heaven.

[10–15] "This night all the hosts of the gods along with the guardians of the world and the seers, having seen Indrajit slain, will sleep soundly, freed from fear. Today, through the loss of Indrajit alone, all the three worlds and the forest-covered earth seem as if empty to me. Today, in the inner apartments, I shall hear the cries of the daughters of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, like the shrill trumpeting of a herd of elephant cows in a mountain cavern. Where have you gone, scorcher of your foes, giving up your succession to the throne and abandoning Lañkā and all of us—the *rākṣasas*, your mother, your wife, and me? Surely it was for you, hero, to have performed the funerary rites when I had gone to the realm of Yama. But now you have reversed this. Since Sugrīva, Rāghava, and Lakṣmaṇa yet live, where have you gone, abandoning us without first removing this source of all my torment?"

[16–21] But even as Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, was afflicted with lamentations such as these, an immense anger, born of the loss of his son, took hold of him. His appearance, which was dreadful by nature, was now transfigured with the fire of his wrath, so that it was as unbearable as that of Rudra when he is filled with wrath. And from the furious *rākṣasa*'s eyes fell teardrops, like flaming drops of oil from two blazing lamps. And as he gnashed his teeth, a grinding sound was heard, as if from some vast engine being turned by the *dānavas*. In whichever direction he cast his glance, the *rākṣasas*, petrified with terror, hid themselves. For in his rage, he was like the fire at the end of a cosmic era. The *rākṣasas* did not dare come near him as he glared in all directions in his rage, like Yama, the ender of all things, intent upon devouring everything in the world.

[22–28] Then, in a towering rage, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, spoke in their midst, anxious to steady them in battle: "Over the course of thousands of years, I practiced all-but-impossible austerities whereby, time after time, self-existent Brahmā was fully gratified. As a result of these austerities,

through the grace of self-existent Brahmā, I have nothing to fear from either the *asuras* or the gods. And the armor, as resplendent as the sun, that Brahmā gave me was never pierced by *vajra* or javelin in any of my battles with the gods and *asuras*. Who then, even Indra, smasher of citadels himself, can approach me, when, this very day, equipped with that armor and mounted in my chariot, I take my stand in combat on the battlefield. Now, for the slaughter of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in the ultimate battle, bring forth to the blare of hundreds of trumpets the great and terrible bow and arrows that were given to me during my battles with the gods and *asuras* by self-existent Brahmā, who was pleased with me."

[29–34] Tormented by the killing of his son and in the grip of his rage, heroic Rāvaṇa, reflecting in his mind, resolved to kill Sītā. The fearsome *rākṣasa*, his eyes red, gazed in his dejection at all the fearsome-looking night-roaming *rākṣasas*, who were murmuring dejectedly, and said: "A short time ago, in order to deceive the forest-dwelling monkeys, my beloved son, employing his power of illusion, showed them an apparition of a murdered woman, saying, 'Here is your Sītā!' Now I will make that a reality, just to please myself. I shall murder Vaidehī, so devoted to that false kshatriya!" When he had addressed his ministers in this fashion, he quickly took up his sword. In his rage, Rāvaṇa hurriedly seized his magnificent sword, which shone like a cloudless sky, and drew it. Then, surrounded by his ministers, his mind reeling with grief for his son, he swiftly rushed forth from the assembly hall to where Maithilī was.

[35–38] Seeing that *rākṣasa* rushing forth, the *rākṣasas* roared like lions. Perceiving that he was enraged, they huddled together and said: "When the two brothers see Rāvaṇa today they will tremble. For in his wrath he conquered the four guardians of the world and laid low many another foe in battle." As they were conversing together, Rāvaṇa, beside himself with rage, went storming toward Vaidehī, who was in the *aśoka* grove. Although his friends, concerned for his welfare, tried to restrain him, he rushed on in his towering rage, like the angry planet Mars racing toward Rohiṇī in the heavens.

[39–49] Blameless Maithilī, who was guarded by the *rākṣasa* women, spied the furious *rākṣasa* brandishing his magnificent sword. Seeing him armed with a sword and not turning back, though his friends tried many times to restrain him, Janaka's daughter was terrified: "From the way he is

racing toward me, suffused with rage, it is clear that this evil-minded wretch is going to kill me, as if I had no one to protect me, although, in fact, I do. For no matter how many times he pressed me, saying, ‘Be my wife, enjoy yourself!’ I rejected him, devoted as I am to my husband. It is clear that because I rejected him as a suitor, he has given up all hope of winning me. Overwhelmed with anger and mad passion, he is now on the point of murdering me. Or perhaps just now, on my account, the ignoble creature has slain in battle the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, tigers among men. Ah! What an evil fate that I should be the cause of the princes’ death. For, foolish wretch that I am, I did not heed the advice of Hanumān. If only I had returned, mounted on his back, then, seated blamelessly in my husband’s lap, I should not now be grieving in this fashion. I think that when Kausalyā, who has but one son, hears that her son has been slain in battle, her heart will surely break. For weeping, she will surely call fondly to mind that great man’s birth, childhood, youth, righteous deeds, and beauty. Losing all hope upon the slaughter of her son, she will perform his funerary rites. Then, in her distraction, she will surely mount the funeral pyre or hurl herself into the water. Damn that hunchbacked slut Mantharā and her wicked scheming! It is on her account that Kausalyā must endure such suffering.”

[50–57] Now, when the wise *rākṣasa* Supārśva saw poor Maithilī lamenting in this fashion, like the constellation Rohiṇī occluded by a hostile planet and so cut off from the moon, her lord, he spoke these words to Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, whose ministers were attempting to restrain him: “How can you, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, the younger brother of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa himself, even think of killing Vaidehī, abandoning righteousness in your anger? You have completed your discipleship in vedic knowledge, and you are ever devoted to the proper duties of your rank. How then, heroic lord of the *rākṣasas*, can you possibly think of killing a woman? You should spare Maithilī, your majesty, endowed as she is with such beauty, and instead, together with us, unleash your wrath upon Rāghava himself. So you must make your preparations this very day, the fourteenth of the dark fortnight. Then, surrounded by your troops, you shall march forth to victory tomorrow on the new-moon day. A wise and heroic warrior, armed with a sword and equipped with a chariot, you, sir, mounted in your splendid chariot, will slay Rāma Dāśarathi and win Maithilī.” Mighty and evil-

minded Rāvaṇa paid heed to that advice that was offered by his friend, in keeping as it was with righteousness. Then, returning to his residence, he went once more to his assembly hall surrounded by his friends.

Sarga 81

[1–5] Upon entering his assembly hall, the king sat down on his splendid throne, despondent and deeply pained, snarling like an angry lion. Tormented by the loss of his son, immensely powerful Rāvaṇa then addressed the leaders of his army, who stood with their hands cupped in reverence: “All of you gentlemen are to march forth surrounded by the entire cavalry and elephant corps and accompanied by the chariot divisions and infantry. Exerting yourselves, you must isolate Rāma, surround him, and then slay him in battle with a hail of arrows, like storm clouds in the rainy seasons. Otherwise tomorrow, in a great battle, as the whole world watches, I shall kill Rāma, whose limbs you gentlemen will have pierced with your sharp arrows.”

[6–9] When the *rākṣasas* had received these instructions from the lord of the *rākṣasas*, they set forth swiftly, surrounded by chariots and columns of elephants. And so at sunrise a fearsome and tumultuous battle broke out between the *rākṣasas* and the monkeys. Then the monkeys and the *rākṣasas* assaulted one another with various types of clubs, darts, swords, and battle-axes. Rivers of blood began to flow, carrying logjams of corpses. They had elephants and chariots for their banks, warhorses for their fish, and battle standards for their trees.

[10–14] Springing up again and again in battle, those splendid monkeys smashed battle standards, armor, chariots, horses, and all kinds of weapons. With their sharp fangs and their claws, the leaping monkeys rent the hair, ears, foreheads, and noses of the *rākṣasas*. A hundred of those bulls among monkeys swarmed about each *rākṣasa* in battle, as birds might a tree laden with fruit. Similarly, the *rākṣasas*, huge as mountains, belabored the fearsome monkeys with darts, swords, battle-axes, and heavy maces. Then the vast host of monkeys, being slaughtered by the *rākṣasas*, sought refuge with Daśaratha’s son Rāma, the refuge of all.

[15–19] Then mighty Rāma of enormous blazing energy took up his bow and, plunging into the *rākṣasa* host, unleashed a hail of arrows. Once Rāma had plunged in, fearsome and blazing with the fire of his arrows, the

rākṣasas could no more approach him than can clouds approach the sun in the heavens. The night-roaming *rākṣasas* could witness the very fearsome and all-but-impossible feats of Rāma in battle only after he had accomplished them. Although he was shaking their vast host and crushing their great chariot-warriors, they could no more see Rāma than can one a gale tearing through a forest. Although they saw that through the skill of Rāma their forces had been cut to pieces, shattered, scorched with arrows, broken, and afflicted by weapons, they could not catch sight of him, so swiftly did he move.

[20–27] Although Rāghava was striking their very bodies, they could no more see him than can creatures see the inner spirit that resides among the objects of sense. "He is slaughtering the elephant corps!" "He is slaughtering the great chariot-warriors!" "With his sharp arrows he is slaughtering the infantry along with the cavalry!" So thinking, because of their seeming similarity to Rāma, all the *rākṣasas* began in their fury to slaughter one another in battle, slaying those *rākṣasas* who resembled Rāghava. And since great Rāma had befuddled them with the mighty, divine weapon-spell of the *gandharvas*, they could not see him, even though he was burning up the army of his foes. Sometimes the *rākṣasas* saw a thousand Rāmas in battle, while at other times they saw but a single Kākutstha in that great conflict. Sometimes they would see only the golden tip of the great warrior's bow, whirling about like a circle of blazing fire, but not Rāghava himself. As he massacred the *rākṣasas* in battle, Rāma appeared to them like a spinning wheel, as does the wheel of time to all creatures. It had his body for its hub, his power for its flames, his arrows for its spokes, his bow for its rim, the sound of his bowstring striking his armguard for its rumbling, his qualities of blazing energy and mental brilliance for its radiance, and the power of his divine weapon-spell for its sharp edge.

[28–33] Thus, in the eighth part of a day, did Rāma with his arrows like flames of fire single-handedly annihilate the forces of the *rākṣasas*, who could take on any form at will: a host of ten thousand chariots as swift as the wind, eighteen thousand mighty war-elephants, fourteen thousand battle-steeds along with their riders, and a full two hundred thousand *rākṣasa* foot soldiers. Their horses slaughtered, their chariots smashed, and their battle standards shattered, the remnants of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*

fled back to the citadel of Laṅkā, exhausted. With its slaughtered elephants, foot soldiers, and horses, the battlefield resembled the playground of wrathful Rudra, wielder of the Pināka. The gods, along with the *gandharvas*, perfected beings, and supreme seers, praised that feat of Rāma, crying, "Excellent! Excellent!"

[34–35] Then Rāma addressed Sugrīva, who stood nearby, saying, "The power of this divine weapon-spell belongs only to me and three-eyed Śiva." When he had slaughtered the *rākṣasa* host, great Rāma, who had conquered all fatigue and who was the equal of Śakra in the use of weapons and divine weapon-spells, was praised by the delighted hosts of the gods.

Sarga 82

[1–4] Thousands of war-elephants and battle-steeds with their riders, thousands of chariots, blazing like fire and flying their battle flags, thousands of valiant *rākṣasas*, who could take on any form at will, were armed with maces and iron clubs, and were resplendent with their golden battle standards—all of these sent forth by Rāvaṇa, Rāma, tireless in action, had now slaughtered with his sharp arrows adorned with burnished gold. When the remnants of the night-roaming *rākṣasa* troops had seen what had happened and the *rākṣasa* women had heard about it, they huddled together in panic, despondent and overwhelmed with gloomy thought.

[5–11] The *rākṣasa* women—widows, those who had lost their sons, and those who had lost their kinsmen—were grief-stricken. Wailing, they huddled together and lamented thus: "How could that potbellied, snaggletoothed hag Śūrpaṇakhā have possibly made advances in the forest to Rāma, who is as handsome as Kandarpa, the god of love? Rāma is delicate, yet immensely powerful. He is devoted to the welfare of all beings. He is mighty, fair of face, and replete with every virtue. This *rākṣasa* woman, on the other hand, with her ugly face, is hideous and lacking in every virtue. Really, someone ought to kill her. How, after seeing him, could that lustful creature have possibly hoped to win him? It is just the bad luck of our race that this white-haired crone, so ill-suited to Rāghava, should have made advances to him. For this was an impermissible and ludicrous act, condemned by everyone, and it has led to the destruction of Dūṣaṇa, Khara, and the *rākṣasas* in general. It was on her account that

Rāvaṇa incurred this tremendous enmity. And so the ten-necked *rākṣasa* abducted Sītā to his own destruction.

[12–17] "Yet although he has not won over Sītā, Janaka's daughter, Rāvaṇa has forged an undying enmity with mighty Rāghava. When he heard that the *rākṣasa* Virādha, who was assaulting Vaidehī, had been killed by Rāma single-handedly, that should have been a sufficient warning. Then, too, in Janasthāna, Rāma slaughtered fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* of fearsome deeds with his arrows, which were like flames of fire. And he slew Khara, Dūṣaṇa, and Triśiras in battle with arrows that blazed like the sun. That too should have been a sufficient warning. Next he slew the blood-guzzling Kabandha, whose arms were a league in length and who bellowed in a transport of rage. That too should have been a sufficient warning. Rāma also slew thousand-eyed Indra's mighty son Vālin, who resembled a storm cloud. That too should have been a sufficient warning.

[18–21] "Sugrīva, his dreams shattered, had been dwelling despondently on Mount Ṛśyamūka. Rāma established him in royal sovereignty. That too should have been a sufficient warning. In his delusion, Rāvaṇa paid no heed to the fitting words spoken by Vibhīṣaṇa, though they were fully in accord with righteousness and polity and were beneficial for all the *rākṣasas*. If only Rāvaṇa, the younger brother of Kubera, bestower of wealth, had acted upon Vibhīṣaṇa's advice, this city of Laṅkā would not have become a cremation ground, overwhelmed by sorrow. Even when he heard that immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa had been slain by Rāghava and that his own beloved son Indrajit had been slain as well, Rāvaṇa still did not understand.

[22–27] " 'My son has been slain in battle! My brother has been slain! My husband has been slain!' Such are the cries that are heard in household after household of the *rākṣasas*. For in battle valiant Rāma has destroyed chariots, horses, elephants, and *rākṣasa* foot soldiers by the hundreds of thousands. It must be Rudra, Viṣṇu, great Indra of the hundred sacrifices, or even Yama himself, the ender of all things, who, in the guise of Rāma, is slaughtering us. With our heroes slain by Rāma, we have lost all hope of life. Foreseeing no end to this terror and bereft of our protectors, we lament. Having been granted his boon, the valiant ten-necked Rāvaṇa does not realize the terrible danger he faces at Rāma's hands in battle. For not even

the gods, the *gandharvas*, the *piśācas*, or the *rākṣasas* can save one who is assailed by Rāma in battle.

[28–31] "Moreover, portents regularly appear to Rāvaṇa in battle after battle, foretelling his death at Rāma's hands. For Grandfather Brahmā, being gratified, granted Rāvaṇa invulnerability to the gods, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas*. But Rāvaṇa never requested invulnerability to men. I believe that this is undoubtedly that very same dangerous vulnerability to men that has now presented itself. It is sure to prove fatal to both Rāvaṇa and the *rākṣasas*. Oppressed by the mighty *rākṣasa* through the gift of his boon, the wise gods worshiped Grandfather Brahmā with fierce austerities.

[32–39] "Gratified, the Grandfather, great Brahmā, spoke these grave words to all the divinities for their benefit: 'From this day hence, all the *dānavas* and *rākṣasas* will eternally wander the three worlds constantly beset by danger.' Then all the gods, led by Indra, came together and propitiated the great god, bull-bannered Śiva, destroyer of Tripura. Gratified, the great god Śiva spoke these words to the gods: 'For your sake, a woman shall be born who will bring about the destruction of the *rākṣasas*.' Employed by the gods, this destroyer of the *rākṣasas*, Sītā, will devour us along with Rāvaṇa, just as, long ago, famine was used to devour the *dānavas*. This dreadful lamentation suffused with sorrow is the direct result of the misconduct of this evil-minded criminal Rāvaṇa. Afflicted as we are by Rāghava, we can see no one in the world who can afford us refuge, any more than one could afford refuge to creatures afflicted by Kāla himself at the end of a cosmic era." Thus did all the women of the night-roaming *rākṣasas* loudly and grievously lament. Afflicted and tormented by a terrible fear, they grew despondent, holding one another in their arms.

Sarga 83

[1–8] Rāvaṇa heard that piteous sound, the lamentation of the grief-stricken *rākṣasa* women, in household after household throughout Laṅkā. Heaving a deep sigh, he remained for a moment lost in thought. Then, seized with a towering rage, Rāvaṇa became fearsome to look upon. Gnawing at his lip, his eyes red with rage, flaring up like the fire of universal destruction, he was unbearable to look upon, even for the *rākṣasas*. The lord of the *rākṣasas* then addressed the *rākṣasas* who stood near him, their speech slurred with fear, as if to scorch them with his gaze: "Quickly! On my

authority, tell Mahodara, Mahāpārśva, and the *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa, 'Send forth the troops!' " Hearing the king's words and acting on his orders, the *rākṣasas*, although stricken with fear, exhorted the *rākṣasa* warriors, who retained their composure. Then all those *rākṣasas* of fearsome aspect said, "So be it!" After performing benedictory rites, they all presented themselves before Rāvaṇa. Honoring Rāvaṇa in the prescribed fashion, all of those great chariot-warriors stood with their hands cupped in reverence, eager for the victory of their lord.

[9–15] Then, laughing but beside himself with rage, Rāvaṇa addressed Mahodara, Mahāpārśva, and the *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa: "This very day, with arrows loosed from my bow and blazing like the sun at the end of a cosmic era, I shall lead Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa to the abode of Yama. This very day, through the slaughter of my enemies, I shall avenge Khara, Kumbhakarṇa, Prahasta, and Indrajit. Obscured by the clouds of my arrows, the atmosphere, directions, rivers, and even the ocean itself shall disappear from view. This very day, with waves in the form of arrows springing from the ocean that is my bow, I shall annihilate the masses of monkey troops, one division after another. This very day, like a bull elephant, I shall wreak havoc upon the lotus ponds that are the monkey troops, their faces like full-blown lotuses, their color that of lotus filaments. This very day, in battle the leaders of the monkey troops, their faces riddled with arrows, shall adorn the earth, like lotuses with their protruding stalks.

[16–20] "With each of the arrows I let fly this day in battle, I shall pierce hundreds and hundreds of the tawny monkeys, so ferocious in combat and armed with trees. Through the slaughter of the enemy, I shall, this very day, wipe away the tears of these women whose husbands, brothers, and sons have been slain. This very day, with the monkeys strewn about pierced by my arrows and robbed of life, I shall make it so that one will have to strain to see the surface of the earth. I shall, this very day, let all the jackals, vultures, and other carnivorous beasts gorge on the flesh of my enemies rent by my arrows. Quickly! Get my chariot ready. Bring my bow at once! Let those night-roaming *rākṣasas* who remain follow me into battle."

[21–25] When Mahāpārśva heard those words of his, he addressed these words to the commanders of the army, who stood nearby, "Assemble the troops at once!" And the commanders of the army then, in great agitation, raced about Laṅkā with rapid strides, rousting the *rākṣasas* from house after

house. In a short time, fearsome-faced *rākṣasas* of fearsome valor issued forth, roaring. They had mighty arms and bore all manner of weapons: swords, spears, lances, maces, cudgels, ploughshares, sharp-edged javelins, huge mallets and war hammers, clubs, shining discuses, sharp battle-axes, short javelins, hundred-slayers, and other splendid weapons.

[26–30] Then, acting on Rāvaṇa's orders, four commanders of the army swiftly brought up a chariot yoked with eight horses and driven by a charioteer. Rāvaṇa then mounted that celestial chariot, which blazed with its own splendor. In the excess of his power, it seemed as if he would tear up the earth itself. With Rāvaṇa's consent, Mahāpārśva, Mahodara, and the unassailable Virūpākṣa then mounted their chariots. Bellowing in their excitement, as if to rend the earth itself, they marched forth, eager for victory, releasing fearsome roars. And thus, endowed with blazing energy and surrounded by the hosts of *rākṣasa* troops, Rāvaṇa marched forth. Holding his bow aloft, he resembled Yama, who brings time itself to an end.

[31–37] Then, in his chariot drawn by swift horses, that great chariot-warrior issued forth through the gate to where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa stood. Suddenly the sun grew dim and the directions were shrouded in darkness. Fierce birds screeched and the earth shook. It rained blood and the horses stumbled. A vulture alighted on the tip of his battle standard and jackals howled inauspiciously. His left eye throbbed and his left arm trembled. His face grew pale; his voice grew faint. And so, as the *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa raced forth to war, these manifestations appeared, presaging his death in battle. A blazing meteor fell from the sky with a sound like that of a thunderclap. Vultures screeched inauspiciously, their cries echoed by the crows. But heedless of these terrible portents that appeared before him, Rāvaṇa, in his delusion, marched forth, impelled by his own impending doom, to seek his own destruction.

[38–42] Hearing the rumbling of the great *rākṣasas*' chariots, the monkey army hurled itself into battle. A hugely tumultuous battle then broke out between the monkeys and the *rākṣasas* as they challenged one another in their fury, eager for victory. Then, with arrows adorned with gold, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, in his rage, wrought a tremendous slaughter among the monkey hosts. Some of the wrinkle-faced monkeys were beheaded by Rāvaṇa, while others were struck dead, their breathing stopped forever. Still others had their flanks ripped open. Some had their heads

shattered, while others had their eyes torn out. Wherever ten-faced Rāvaṇa moved through the battle in his chariot, his eyes wide with fury, the troop leaders of the tawny monkeys could not withstand the crushing force of his arrows.

Sarga 84

[1–4] Thus did Rāvaṇa litter the ground, covering it with tawny monkeys, their limbs severed by his arrows. The leaping monkeys could no more withstand Rāvaṇa's single-handed and irresistible barrage of arrows than can moths a blazing fire. Tormented by those sharp arrows, they ran shrieking in all directions, as might elephants burned by the flames of a forest fire that surrounds them. Rāvaṇa careened through the battle, scattering with his arrows the hosts of leaping monkeys, as would a mighty wind great banks of clouds.

[5–12] Having swiftly wrought his slaughter of the forest-dwelling monkeys, the *rākṣasa* lord then immediately approached Rāghava in battle. When Sugrīva saw his monkeys broken in battle and fleeing in all directions, he placed Suṣeṇa in charge of the encampment and resolved to enter the fight at once. Having placed that heroic monkey, his equal, in charge, Sugrīva turned his face toward the enemy and set forth armed with a tree. All the troop leaders, whether at his side or in his train, voluntarily followed him, wielding huge boulders and various gigantic trees. Roaring with a mighty voice in battle, great Sugrīva began to slaughter the principal *rākṣasas*, felling various others as well. The gigantic lord of the monkeys knocked down the *rākṣasas*, as the mighty gale at the end of a cosmic era does full-grown trees. He showered hails of stones upon the *rākṣasa* hosts, just as a storm cloud might a shower of hailstones on flocks of birds in the forest. Their heads shattered by the hails of boulders released by the king of the monkeys, the *rākṣasas* crumpled like mountains cut to pieces.

[13–16] As the *rākṣasas,* routed, falling, and crying out, were being annihilated on every side by Sugrīva, the unassailable *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa, calling out his own name, took up his bow and, leaping from his chariot, mounted the back of a war-elephant. Once the great chariot-warrior Virūpākṣa had mounted the elephant, he charged at the monkeys, unleashing a terrifying roar. He loosed fearsome arrows at Sugrīva in the

vanguard of the army and, rallying the frightened *rākṣasas*, he made them hold their lines.

[17–24] Completely riddled with sharp arrows by that *rākṣasa*, the irascible lord of the monkeys flew into a rage and resolved to kill him. Then, uprooting a tree, the heroic tawny monkey leapt forward and, in battle, struck Virūpākṣa's great war-elephant in the face. Stricken with that blow by Sugrīva, the great elephant staggered back a bow length and collapsed, bellowing. Jumping clear of the wounded elephant, the mighty *rākṣasa* turned to face the monkey, who stood his ground. Seizing his sword and oxhide shield, he advanced upon Sugrīva with swift strides, reviling him. In his rage at Virūpākṣa, Sugrīva seized a boulder as huge as a storm cloud and hurled it at him. Seeing that boulder hurtling toward him, the immensely valiant bull among *rākṣasas* dodged it and then struck Sugrīva with his sword. In a towering rage, he cut away Sugrīva's armor with his sword there in the forefront of battle. Struck with that sword, the monkey fell.

[25–33] But the fallen monkey sprang up and unleashed a blow with the palm of his hand, which, with its terrifying sound, was like a thunderbolt. The *rākṣasa*, however, skillfully dodged the blow that Sugrīva had dealt and in return struck him on the chest with his fist. Now, when Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys, saw that the *rākṣasa* had dodged his blow, he grew even more enraged. Then, spying an opening, the monkey, in his rage, brought his huge palm down upon Virūpākṣa's temple. Struck by that palm, which was like the thunderbolt of great Indra, he fell to the ground, drenched in gore and vomiting blood. Drenched with foaming blood, his eyes rolling with rage, Virūpākṣa appeared to the monkeys to have his eyes still more disfigured than before. The monkeys watched their enemy as, drenched in blood, he rolled in convulsions from side to side, moaning piteously. Then those vast and powerful armies—that of the monkeys and that of the *rākṣasas*—who were engaged in battle, roared fearsomely, like two great oceans that have crashed beyond their shorelines. When the combined host of the monkeys and the *rākṣasas* saw the immensely powerful *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa, his eyes disfigured, slain by the king of the tawny monkeys, it became as agitated as the Ganges in raging flood.

Sarga 85

[1–7] As the two armies were being rapidly slaughtered by each other in that tremendous battle, they both were vastly diminished, like two lakes in the scorching heat of summer. At the slaughter of his troops and the slaying of Virūpākṣa, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, grew doubly furious. Seeing his army decimated by the wrinkle-faced monkeys and thus diminished, he realized that the fortunes of war had turned against him and he grew agitated. He said to Mahodara, tamer of his foes, who stood beside him: "At this point, great-armed warrior, you are my only hope of victory: Annihilate the army of our enemies, hero! Demonstrate this day your valor! Now is the time to repay your obligation to your master. Fight bravely!" Addressed in this fashion, Mahodara replied, "So be it," to the *rākṣasa* lord and then plunged into the enemy army, like a moth into a fire. Then, urged on by his master's words and his own valor, that immensely powerful *rākṣasa*, filled with blazing energy, sowed destruction among the monkeys.

[8–12] Then Sugrīva, seeing the vast monkey army routed, ran toward Mahodara, who happened to be nearby. Seizing a huge and fearsome boulder as big as a mountain, the immensely powerful lord of the tawny monkeys hurled it in order to kill Mahodara. When Mahodara saw that unstoppable boulder hurtling violently toward him, he was not in the least agitated, and he cut it to pieces with his arrows. Shattered into a thousand fragments by the *rākṣasa* with his torrents of arrows, the boulder fell to earth, like a frenzied flock of vultures descending. When Sugrīva saw that his boulder had been shattered, he was beside himself with rage. Uprooting a *sāla* tree, he hurled it at the *rākṣasa* in the forefront of battle. But that heroic conqueror of enemy citadels cut it to pieces with his arrows.

[13–16] In his rage, Sugrīva then spied an iron club that had fallen to the ground. He brandished that blazing iron club and made a display of it before his foe. Then, with its tip, he violently struck down Mahodara's splendid horses. Jumping down from his huge chariot, now that its horses had been slain, the heroic *rākṣasa* Mahodara, in his rage, seized a mace. Like two bellowing bulls, the two heroes closed with each other in combat. With one holding a mace and the other an iron club, they resembled two storm clouds streaked with lightning. The lord of the tawny monkeys struck the *rākṣasa*'s mace with his iron club; but, shattered by that mace, his iron club fell to the ground.

[17–21] Then Sugrīva, filled with blazing energy, snatched up from the ground a fearsome iron cudgel, fully ornamented with gold. Raising it aloft, he threw it, just as Mahodara hurled a second mace. The two collided and fell, shattered, to the earth. Their weapons shattered, the two warriors closed in combat with their fists. Filled with strength and blazing energy, they resembled two blazing fires, eaters of oblations. They struck at each other and roared again and again. Slapping each other with their open hands, they both fell to the ground. Jumping swiftly to their feet, they struck each other once again. The two heroes flailed at each other with their arms, yet neither could get the better of the other.

[22–29] Then the immensely swift *rākṣasa* Mahodara seized a sword and a shield that were lying nearby. But swifter still, Sugrīva, foremost of monkeys, also seized a huge sword and shield that had fallen. Their very bodies suffused with rage, the two warriors, skilled in the use of weapons, hurled themselves at each other on the battlefield, swords raised, roaring in the fury of battle. Raging at each other and intent on victory, the two quickly circled each other to the right and to the left. Then the immensely swift hero, evil-minded Mahodara, praiseworthy for his valor, brought his sword down upon Sugrīva's great shield. The sword lodged in the shield; and, as Mahodara struggled to free it, that elephant among monkeys, with his sword, cut off the *rākṣasa*'s head, along with its helmet and earrings. When they saw that, the army of the *rākṣasa* lord—who had fallen to the ground with his head cut off—fled. Having slain Mahodara, the tawny monkey was overjoyed, and he and his monkeys roared in unison. Ten-necked Rāvaṇa was enraged, while Rāghava appeared delighted.

Sarga 86

[1–4] Once Mahodara had been struck down, the immensely powerful Mahāpārśva wrought havoc with his arrows upon Aṅgada's fearsome army. On every side, he struck off the heads from the bodies of the principal monkeys, just as the wind might fruit from its stalk. In a towering rage, the *rākṣasa*, with his arrows, cut off the arms and shoulders of some of the monkeys and tore open the sides of others. Afflicted by Mahāpārśva with his hail of arrows, the monkeys, their faces cast down in despair, were stunned.

[5–11] Now, when great-armed Añgada saw that his army was cowed and afflicted by the *rākṣasa*, he surged powerfully forward, like the ocean on the new- or full-moon day. Seizing an iron club, whose radiance was like that of the sun's rays, the foremost of monkeys brought it down in combat upon Mahāpārśva. Stunned by that blow, Mahāpārśva fell senseless from his chariot to the ground along with his charioteer. At this point, the extraordinarily powerful Gavākṣa, filled with blazing energy and resembling a mass of black collyrium, accompanied by Jāmbavān, the king of the apes, burst forth from his own troop, which resembled a great storm cloud. In his rage, he seized a huge boulder that resembled a mountain peak, swiftly killed Mahāpārśva's horses, and smashed his chariot. But regaining consciousness after a short while, immensely powerful Mahāpārśva once again riddled Añgada with numerous arrows. He struck Jāmbavān, king of the apes, in the center of his chest with three arrows and hit Gavākṣa with many more.

[12–19] Now, when Añgada saw Gavākṣa and Jāmbavān tormented by arrows, he was beside himself with rage, and he seized a fearsome iron club. Enraged at that *rākṣasa*, who stood at a distance, Vālin's powerful son, Añgada, grasped with both hands that iron club, whose radiance was like that of the sun's rays, and, whirling it about, he hurled it at Mahāpārśva in an effort to kill him. Hurled by the powerful monkey, the iron club struck the bow and arrows from the *rākṣasa*'s hand and knocked off his helmet. Rushing violently upon him in his rage, the valorous son of Vālin struck him with his palm just below the ear, where his earring hung. But the immensely powerful Mahāpārśva of blazing splendor was enraged in turn and seized an immense battle-axe with one hand. In a towering rage, the *rākṣasa* brought down that weapon—honed with oil, spotless, solid, and made of the essence of the mountains—upon Vālin's son. He swung the battle-axe powerfully at Añgada's left shoulder blade, but, in his fury, Añgada dodged it.

[20–23] In a towering rage, heroic Añgada, equal in valor to his own father, clenched his adamantine fist. Knowing all the body's vital points, he brought that fist, whose impact was equal to that of Indra's thunderbolt, down upon the *rākṣasa*'s chest, just over his heart. By virtue of that blow delivered in that great battle, the *rākṣasa*'s heart burst, and he fell at once to

the ground, dead. When he had fallen to the ground, his army was deeply shaken there in that battle, but Rāvaṇa flew into a tremendous rage.

Sarga 87

[1–4] When Rāvaṇa saw that the *rākṣasas* Mahodara and Mahāpārśva had been slain and that the immensely powerful hero Virūpākṣa had been slain before them, a tremendous rage seized hold of him there in that great battle. He urged on his charioteer, saying these words: "In killing those two, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, I shall allay my grief for my slaughtered ministers and my besieged city. I shall destroy in battle the tree that is Rāma, which dispenses fruit and has Sītā for its blossom, and whose branches are Sugrīva, Jāmbavān, Kumuda, and Nala."

[5–10] Causing the ten directions to resound with the rumbling of his chariot, that great and splendid chariot-warrior raced swiftly onward and charged directly at Rāghava. Filled with that sound, the entire earth, along with its rivers, mountains, and forests, its boar, deer, and elephants, shook. Rāvaṇa then produced the extremely horrifying and fearsome divine weapon-spell, the Tāmasa, bringer of darkness, and, with it, he scorched all the monkeys. They fled on every side. When Rāghava saw that those numerous hosts had been routed in their hundreds by Rāvaṇa's splendid arrows, he took up his battle stance. Rāvaṇa then spied the unconquerable Rāma, who stood there with his brother Lakṣmaṇa like Vāsava with Viṣṇu. Holding aloft his great bow, the long-armed, lotus-eyed tamer of his foes seemed as if to scrape the very sky.

[11–14] Meanwhile, Rāghava, for his part, seeing the monkeys routed in battle and Rāvaṇa rushing toward him, was delighted. He grasped his bow in the middle. Then he began to twang that magnificent bow powerfully and loudly, as if to shatter the earth itself. As Rāvaṇa came within the range of the princes' arrows, he looked like Rāhu, the demon of the eclipse, as he bears down upon the sun and the hare-marked moon. The streams of Rāvaṇa's arrows and the sound of Rāma twanging his bow knocked the *rākṣasas* down by the hundreds.

[15–17] Eager to be the first to fight Rāvaṇa with his own sharp arrows, Lakṣmaṇa drew his bow and released arrows that were like flames of fire. But no sooner had those arrows been released by the bowman Lakṣmaṇa than the immensely powerful Rāvaṇa intercepted them in the air with his

own arrows. He cut down one of Lakṣmaṇa’s arrows with one of his own, three with three, and ten with ten, thus displaying his deftness of hand.

[18–21] Then, leaving Saumitri aside, Rāvaṇa, victorious in battle, advanced upon Rāma, who stood there as immovable as a mountain. And as he advanced upon Rāma Rāghava in battle, Rāvaṇa, his eyes red with rage, unleashed hails of arrows upon him. But Rāma, seeing those torrents of arrows hurtling swiftly toward him as they were loosed from Rāvaṇa’s bow, quickly took up his crescent-headed arrows. Then, with his sharp, crescent-headed arrows, Rāghava cut down those torrents of immensely powerful arrows, which blazed like angry, venomous serpents.

[22–27] In this way, they swiftly showered each other—Rāghava, Rāvaṇa; and Rāvaṇa, Rāghava—with all manner of sharp arrows. Never yet defeated in battle, the two of them circled each other for a long time to the left and to the right in an astonishing way, each of them keeping his eyes on the trajectory of the other’s arrows. All creatures were terrified as those two fierce warriors, resembling Yama and Antaka, ender of all things, fought each other, unleashing their arrows. At that time, the sky was completely covered with their various arrows, just as it is at the end of the hot season by storm clouds laced with streaks of lightning. The streams of their arrows—arrows that were immensely powerful, keenly honed, fletched with vulture feathers, and extremely swift—made the sky appear to be densely covered with latticework. With their arrows, the two heroes then created a massive and fearsome darkness, as might two vast storm clouds arising at sunset.

[28–32] A tumultuous battle—like that between Vṛtra and Vāsava—unequaled and unimaginable, then raged between the two warriors, each intent on killing the other. Both were armed with splendid bows, both were skilled in the use of weapons, both were preeminent among those familiar with divine weapon-spells, and they hurled themselves at each other in battle. As they maneuvered, waves of arrows preceded them, as might the waves of two oceans driven by the wind. Then Rāvaṇa, who makes the worlds cry out, his hands working swiftly, unleashed a chain of iron arrows upon Rāma’s forehead. Although he bore that chain of iron arrows—shot from that fearsome bow and shining like the petals of a blue lotus—on his head, Rāma took no harm.

[33–37] Rāma, suffused with rage, muttered sacred *mantras* and invoked the divine weapon-spell of Rudra. Then, taking up his arrows once again, that mighty warrior of immense blazing energy bent his bow and let them fly. Allowing no interruption in the stream of his arrows, he loosed them toward the lord of the *rākṣasas*. But those arrows fell harmlessly on the *rākṣasa* lord's impenetrable armor, which resembled a huge storm cloud. But then, with a splendid, divine weapon, Rāma, skilled in all divine weapon-spells, pierced the *rākṣasa* lord through the forehead, as the latter stood in his chariot. But those arrows, after shattering the splendid arrows of Rāvaṇa, were deflected by him and so entered the earth, hissing like five-headed serpents.

[38–42] Having thus thwarted Rāghava's divine weapons, Rāvaṇa, beside himself with rage, invoked yet another divine weapon-spell, the truly dreadful one belonging to the *asuras*. He then released sharp arrows. The heads of some were like those of lions and tigers, while others had the heads of adjutant storks and crows. Some had the heads of vultures and kites while others had the heads of jackals. Some had the heads of wolves, their jaws gaping and terrifying. Still others were like five-headed serpents with flickering tongues. Hissing like an angry serpent, the immensely powerful *rākṣasa*, employing his powers of illusion, then loosed still more sharp arrows at Rāma. Some of these arrows had the heads of donkeys, while others were shaped like the heads of boars. Some had the heads of dogs and cocks, while others had the heads of sea monsters and venomous serpents.

[43–47] Assaulted by that divine weapon-spell of the *asuras*, the immensely energetic delight of the Raghus invoked the divine weapon-spell of Agni, the purifier, a weapon-spell that was like the purifying fire itself. Rāma then released sharp arrows. Some of these arrows had heads blazing with fire, while some had heads like the sun. Some had heads like the moon or half-moon, while others had heads like comets. Some resembled planets and constellations, while others had heads shaped like huge meteors. Still others were like streaks of lightning. Intercepted in the air by Rāghava's divine weapons, Rāvaṇa's fearsome arrows disappeared, shattering into thousands of fragments. When the monkeys, who could take on any form at will, saw that Rāma, tireless in action, had struck down Rāvaṇa's divine weapons, they roared in delight.

Sarga 88

[1–5] Now, when that divine weapon-spell of his had been thwarted, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, redoubled his fury and, in his rage, invoked yet another divine weapon-spell. Immensely lustrous Rāvaṇa then prepared to invoke against Rāghava that other fierce and fearsome divine weapon-spell devised by Maya, the craftsman of the *asuras*. Then, from his bow, lances, maces, and cudgels flew forth—all of them blazing and as hard as adamant. Like the mighty gales at the end of a cosmic era, there flew forth various mallets, war hammers, nooses, and blazing darts, as well as various other sharp weapons. But immensely lustrous Rāghava, foremost of those familiar with the great divine weapon-spells, thwarted that divine weapon-spell with the supreme divine weapon-spell of the *gandharvas*.

[6–12] But when that divine weapon-spell of his had been thwarted by great Rāghava, Rāvaṇa, his eyes red with rage, invoked the divine weapon-spell of Sūrya. Then huge and blazing discuses flew forth from the bow of wise ten-necked Rāvaṇa of fearsome power. As they descended on every side, they lit up the sky, as the blazing moon, sun, and planets might light up the directions if they were to fall. But with torrents of arrows, Rāghava cut down the discuses and various other weapons of Rāvaṇa there in the vanguard of the army. When Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, saw that that divine weapon-spell had been thwarted, he riddled Rāma in all his vital points with ten arrows. Nonetheless, although Rāvaṇa had riddled him with ten arrows loosed from his mighty bow, immensely powerful Rāghava was not shaken in the least. And then Rāghava, victorious in battle, in a towering rage, riddled Rāvaṇa in every limb with numerous arrows.

[13–16] At this juncture, Rāghava's younger brother, mighty Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes, took up seven arrows in a rage. And with those seven immensely powerful arrows, that immensely lustrous hero shredded Rāvaṇa's battle standard with its image of a human head. With a single arrow, majestic and immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa took off the head of the charioteer of the *rākṣasa*, son of chaos, along with its glittering earrings. And with five sharp arrows Lakṣmaṇa cut to pieces the *rākṣasa* lord's bow, so like an elephant's trunk, along with his arrows.

[17–21] Meanwhile, Vibhīṣaṇa leapt forward and, with his mace, slew Rāvaṇa's splendid horses, as huge as mountains and resembling black storm clouds. Jumping swiftly down from his great chariot, now that its horses

had been slain, powerful Rāvaṇa conceived a burning rage toward his brother. Then the valorous and immensely powerful *rākṣasa* lord hurled at Vibhīṣaṇa a blazing javelin that was like a blazing bolt of lightning. But Lakṣmaṇa cut it to pieces with three arrows before it reached Vibhīṣaṇa. At that, a mighty roar went up in the battle from the monkeys. Encircled with gold, the javelin fell to earth cut into four pieces, like a huge glowing meteor falling from the sky in a shower of blazing sparks.

[22–26] Then Rāvaṇa took up a huge javelin, which he prized greatly. It glowed with its own blazing energy, and even Kāla himself could not withstand it. Brandished violently by the mighty but evil-minded Rāvaṇa, that supremely terrifying weapon blazed with a splendor equal to that of Śakra's thunderbolt. At that very moment, heroic Lakṣmaṇa ran quickly to Vibhīṣaṇa, who was now in mortal danger. In order to save him, heroic Lakṣmaṇa drew back his bow and, with a hail of arrows, showered Rāvaṇa, who stood there, javelin in hand. Pelted by that torrent of arrows let loose by great Lakṣmaṇa, Rāvaṇa, his martial ardor now diverted, decided not to strike his brother.

[27–31] Seeing that Lakṣmaṇa had saved his brother, Rāvaṇa positioned himself so that he faced Lakṣmaṇa and said these words: "Since you, so proud of your strength, have saved Vibhīṣaṇa in this fashion, this javelin, sparing the *rākṣasa*, will now fall upon you. After piercing your heart, this blood-stained javelin, flung by the iron club that is my arm, will fly on its way, taking with it your life breaths." When he had spoken in this fashion, Rāvaṇa, taking aim at Lakṣmaṇa, roared and, in a towering rage, hurled that javelin. With its eight bells it made a terrific sound. Maya, the craftsman of the *asuras*, had forged it with his supernatural power so that it was infallible in slaying one's enemies. It glowed with blazing energy.

[32–35] Hurled with terrifying force and emitting a roar like that of Śakra's thunderbolt, the javelin struck Lakṣmaṇa with tremendous impact there in the forefront of battle. But even as that javelin was hurtling toward Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma Rāghava addressed it, saying: "May Lakṣmaṇa be spared! And may you, your energy thwarted, be foiled!" Nonetheless, that immensely brilliant weapon, flashing like the flickering tongue of a serpent king, fell with tremendous force on Lakṣmaṇa's broad chest. Then Lakṣmaṇa, his heart pierced by that javelin, so deeply embedded through Rāvaṇa's strength, fell to the ground.

[36–41] When Rāghava of enormous blazing energy, who was nearby, saw Lakṣmaṇa in that condition, his heart sank out of love for his brother. He remained lost for a moment in thought, his eyes filled with tears. Then he flared up in anger, like Agni, the purifier, at the end of a cosmic era. Reflecting, "This is no time for despondency," Rāghava began a tumultuous battle, intent upon slaying Rāvaṇa. Rāma then gazed at Lakṣmaṇa, who, pierced by that javelin in the great battle and drenched in blood, resembled a mountain with a mighty serpent. Try as they might, the foremost among the tawny monkeys, harried as they were by the swift-handed *rākṣasa* with his torrents of arrows, were unable to extract the javelin that had been flung by mighty Rāvaṇa. But Rāma, in the rage of battle, seized with both hands that terrifying javelin, which, having transfixed Saumitri, was embedded in the earth. Wrenching it out violently, he broke it in two.

[42–53] But even as Rāma was wrenching out the javelin, mighty Rāvaṇa pelted his every limb with arrows that pierced his vitals. Heedless of those arrows, Rāghava embraced Lakṣmaṇa and then said this to Hanumān and Sugrīva: "Foremost of monkeys, you must stay here and care for Lakṣmaṇa. The moment to display my valor is now at hand, a moment I have long awaited, as does a thirsty *cātaka* the sight of rain clouds at the end of the hot season. Now the evil-minded ten-necked Rāvaṇa of evil intent must die. I give you my solemn word here and now, monkeys, that very soon you shall see a world that is either without Rāvaṇa or without Rāma. For once I have slain Rāvaṇa in battle today, I will put behind me all the terrible suffering and hellish torment that I endured: the loss of my kingdom, the sojourn in the wilderness, the wandering in the Daṇḍaka, the assault on Vaidehī, and the clashes with the *rākṣasas*. For that evil wretch—on whose account I bridged and crossed the ocean and brought the monkey army here after slaying Vālin in combat and placing Sugrīva on the throne—has now come within my sight here in battle. Indeed, once he comes within the range of my sight, Rāvaṇa can no more survive than can a person seen by a serpent whose mere glance is deadly venom. So, unassailable bulls among monkeys, you should seat yourselves comfortably on the mountaintops and watch the battle between Rāvaṇa and me. This very day, let the three worlds, along with the *gandharvas*, the gods, the seers, and the celestial bards, witness in battle what makes Rāma Rāma. Today, I shall perform such a feat that all the worlds, with their moving and fixed contents

and including the gods themselves, will talk about as long as the earth shall endure."

[54–59] When he had spoken in this fashion, Rāma, with great concentration, struck ten-necked Rāvaṇa in battle with sharp arrows adorned with burnished gold. And Rāvaṇa, in turn, then showered Rāma with blazing iron arrows and cudgels, as might a storm cloud with its torrential rains. And a tumultuous sound arose as the various arrows loosed by Rāma and Rāvaṇa crashed into one another. Broken and scattered, the arrows of Rāma and Rāvaṇa fell from the sky to the ground, their arrowheads blazing. The deafening sound of the bowstrings of Rāma and Rāvaṇa striking against their armguards was almost miraculous, and it terrified all beings. Rāvaṇa was covered with dense hails of arrows and thus tormented by the great wielder of the blazing bow. Having first joined battle, he now fled in terror, like a great storm cloud driven before the wind.

Sarga 89

[1–5] When Rāma had thus given tumultuous battle to evil-minded Rāvaṇa, he spoke these words to Suṣeṇa, even as he continued to discharge his torrents of arrows: "Here is heroic Lakṣmaṇa, fallen to the ground through the power of Rāvaṇa. He is writhing like a snake, filling me with sorrow. When I see that hero, dearer to me than life itself, drenched with blood, my mind is in such turmoil that I wonder what power I have left to fight. For if my brother, so praiseworthy in battle and marked with auspicious signs, has truly returned to the elements, then of what use to me is pleasure or indeed life itself? For my valor itself seems to hang its head in shame, while my bow seems to slip from my grasp. My arrows drop away, and my sight is dimmed with tears. Dreadful thoughts grow in my mind, and I wish now only for death."

[6–8] Thus did Rāma, his senses overwhelmed, lament in the greatest despair when he saw his brother struck down by evil-minded Rāvaṇa, saying: "Seeing my brother Lakṣmaṇa struck down in the dust of the battlefield, I have no further use for battle, for my life, or even for Sītā herself. Now that Lakṣmaṇa lies slain in the forefront of battle, what use have I for kingship or for life itself? There is now no longer any purpose to this war."

[9–16] Then, consoling Rāma, heroic Suṣeṇa spoke these words: “Great-armed Lakṣmaṇa, increaser of prosperity, is not dead. For his face has not altered, nor has it darkened or lost its radiance. Indeed, his countenance looks quite radiant and clear. The palms of his hands are as red as the lotus, and his eyes are clear. This is not the way people look, lord of the peoples, when their life breaths have left them. So do not despair, heroic tamer of your foes. He is still alive. As he lies here unconscious, his limbs sprawling on the ground, the rhythmic movement of his chest proclaims that he still lives, hero.” Once Suṣeṇa, skilled in speech, had uttered these words to Rāghava, he immediately said this to Hanumān, who stood nearby: “Go swiftly hence, gentle friend, to the splendid mountain known as the mountain of healing herbs, which Jāmbavān told you about earlier. Then bring back the splendid healing herb known as *viśalyakaraṇī*, ‘the healer of arrow wounds,’ which grows on its southernmost peak. Go swiftly and, in order to revive the great hero Lakṣmaṇa, you must also bring the *sauvarṇakaraṇī*, ‘the restorer of a golden glow,’ the *saṃjīvanī*, ‘the restorer of life,’ and the *saṃdhānakaraṇī*, ‘the joiner of limbs.’ ”

[17–21] Addressed in this fashion, Hanumān proceeded to the mountain of healing herbs. But unable to identify those potent herbs, the majestic monkey fell to brooding. But then Māruti of immeasurable blazing energy had this idea: “I will take this mountain peak and go back! For if I were to return without bringing the *viśalyakaraṇī*, the loss of time would lead to dire consequences and there might be a serious calamity.” Reflecting thus, immensely powerful Hanumān immediately descended on the peak of that mountain and, seizing it, flew off. Returning, he said: “I could not identify those healing herbs, bull among tawny monkeys; so I brought the entire mountain peak.”

[22–25] Suṣeṇa, foremost of monkeys, praised the son of Pavana, who was speaking in this fashion. Then he plucked and gathered the healing herbs. Then that foremost of monkeys, Suṣeṇa of immense luster, crushed one of the herbs and held it to Lakṣmaṇa’s nose. No sooner had that slayer of enemy heroes, Lakṣmaṇa, who had been pierced by that javelin, inhaled that aroma than he leapt up from the ground, free from the javelin and the pain it had caused. When the tawny monkeys saw that Lakṣmaṇa had leapt up from the ground, they were delighted and, crying, “Excellent! Excellent!” they honored Suṣeṇa.

[26–28] Then Rāma, slayer of enemy heroes, addressed Lakṣmaṇa, saying: "Come to me, come to me." His eyes clouded with tears, he embraced him tightly in his affection. Embracing Saumitri, Rāghava then said to him: "Thank heavens, I see you, hero, risen from the dead. Sītā, victory, and life itself have no meaning for me. For if you had returned to the elements, what purpose, indeed, would I have had in living?"

[29–34] As great Rāma was speaking in this fashion, Lakṣmaṇa, distressed at this fainthearted speech, said these words: "Having first made that vow, truly valorous warrior, you must not now speak in this fashion, like some weak and insignificant person. For, blameless hero, the virtuous do not falsify their vows. Indeed, the keeping of one's vows is the sign of greatness. So enough of your giving way to despair on my account, blameless hero. You must keep your vow by slaying Rāvaṇa this very day. For once he comes within range of your arrows, your enemy will no more escape with his life than would a great bull elephant that comes within the clutches of a roaring, sharp-fanged lion. I long for the swift death of that evil-minded wretch before the sun, maker of day, sets behind the western mountain, his day's work done."

Sarga 90

[1–4] When Rāghava had heard those words uttered by Lakṣmaṇa, he loosed fearsome arrows at Rāvaṇa there in the vanguard of the army. But ten-necked Rāvaṇa, mounted in his chariot, in turn pelted Rāma with enormously fearsome arrows that resembled thunderbolts, as might a storm cloud with torrents of rain. Nonetheless, Rāma, with great concentration, pierced ten-necked Rāvaṇa in battle with arrows, which, adorned with gold, resembled blazing fires. Then the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* declared, "This combat between Rāma, who is standing on the ground, and the *rākṣasa*, mounted in his chariot, is not fair."

[5–12] Just then, shining like the rising sun, the majestic and splendid chariot of the king of the gods, ornamented with hundreds of bells, its body studded with gold, its yoke pole made of lapis, and its flagstaff made of gold, descended from Triviṣṭapa, Indra's heaven. It was yoked with splendid bay steeds, which, with their golden plumes, white tufts, and ornaments of gold fretwork, were as radiant as the sun. It drew near to Kākutstha. Standing in the chariot and holding the whip, Mātali, the

charioteer of thousand-eyed Indra, cupped his hands in reverence and spoke these words to Rāma: “Thousand-eyed Indra has given you this majestic, foe-destroying chariot so that you may obtain victory, mighty Kākutstha. And here too are Indra’s great bow, armor shining like fire, arrows as brilliant as the sun, and a sharp, glittering javelin. So mount this chariot, heroic Rāma, and, with me as your charioteer, slay the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa, just as did great Indra the *dānavas*.” Addressed in this fashion, Rāma respectfully circumambulated the chariot and, after reverentially saluting Mātali, mounted it, illuminating the worlds with his splendor as he did so.

[13–18] Then there ensued an astonishing and hair-raising chariot duel between great-armed Rāma and the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa. Rāghava, who had mastered the most powerful divine weapon-spells, thwarted each divine weapon-spell of the *rākṣasa* king with one of his own—a divine weapon-spell of the *gandharvas* with a divine weapon-spell of the *gandharvas*, a divine weapon-spell of the gods with a divine weapon-spell of the gods. Then, in a towering rage, the lord of the night-roaming *rākṣasas* invoked the supremely fearsome divine weapon-spell of the *rākṣasas*. Loosed from Rāvaṇa’s bow, the arrows, adorned with gold, turned into venomous serpents and sped toward Kākutstha. With gaping jaws and mouths aflame, those terrifying serpents hurtled toward Rāma, spewing blazing fire from their mouths. All the cardinal directions were filled, and the intermediate ones covered, by those serpents with their blazing hoods and deadly venom. Their very touch was equal to that of the great serpent Vāsuki.

[19–21] But when Rāma saw those serpents hurtling toward him in battle, he produced the dreadful and fear-inspiring divine weapon-spell of Garuḍa. Loosed from Rāghava’s bow, the gold-fletched arrows, blazing like fire, turned into golden eagles, the foes of the serpents, and intercepted them. Rāma’s arrows, which could take on any form at will, took the form of eagles and struck down all of those swift arrows, which had taken on the form of serpents.

[22–26] Enraged at the thwarting of his divine weapon-spell, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, pelted Rāma with dreadful hails of arrows. Then, after harassing Rāma, tireless in action, with a thousand arrows, he riddled Mātali with a veritable torrent of them. After first knocking the golden battle standard to the floor of the chariot, Rāvaṇa struck down Indra’s horses with a mass of arrows. Then, seeing that Rāma was hard-pressed, the

gods, *gandharvas*, *dānavas*, celestial bards, perfected beings, and supreme seers became despondent. And the foremost of monkeys, together with Vibhīṣaṇa, seeing the moon in the form of Rāma swallowed up, as it were, by Rāhu, the demon of the eclipse in the form of Rāvaṇa, were similarly distressed.

[27–30] Mercury, the planet baleful to all creatures, stood in occlusion of Rohiṇī, the constellation beloved of the hare-marked moon and presided over by Prajāpati, lord of creatures. The sea seemed to be ablaze, its waves shrouded in smoke. Heaving upward in its fury, it seemed almost to touch the sun, maker of day. The sun, maker of day, its rays dimmed, its color that of iron, looked ghastly. In conjunction with a smoke-bannered comet, it seemed to be crossed by a headless trunk. And Mars stood in occlusion of Viśākhā, the constellation of the ruling House of Kosala. This constellation, whose presiding deities are Indra and Agni, was clearly visible in the sky.

[31–33] With his ten faces and twenty arms, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, grasping his bow, looked like Mount Maināka. Hard-pressed by the *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa in the forefront of the battle, Rāma was unable even to nock his arrows. Knitting his brows in anger, his eyes turning red with fury, Rāma flew into a towering rage, seeming almost to scorch his foe with his gaze.

Sarga 91

[1–4] At the sight of the face of wise Rāma in his fury, all creatures were stricken with terror, and the earth itself trembled. The mountain, with its lions and tigers and its deeply rooted trees, shook violently, while the ocean, lord of rivers, grew wildly agitated. And on every side, ominous birds with harsh cries, braying like donkeys, circled in the sky, screeching. Seeing Rāma in such a towering rage and observing those extremely dire portents, all creatures were stricken with terror, and fear entered Rāvaṇa's heart.

[5–8] The gods, standing in their aerial chariots, the *gandharvas*, the great serpents, seers, *dānavas*, *daityas*, and the great birds, who soar through the sky, then watched the battle between those two heroes as they engaged with their various fearsome weapons. It seemed like the destruction of the universe. And as they watched that great duel, all the gods and *asuras*, hostile as always to each other, shouted words of support in their excitement. Arrayed in their ranks, the *asuras* shouted, "Be

victorious!” to ten-necked Rāvaṇa, while the gods cried out again and again to Rāma, “May you be victorious!”

[9–12] At this juncture, evil-minded Rāvaṇa, in his rage at Rāghava, fingered his mighty weapons in his desire to strike him down. Then, blazing, as it were, with fury, he seized a lance. Hard as adamant and emitting a mighty clangor, it was lethal to all enemies. Fitted with barbs as huge as mountain peaks, it was fearsome to look upon. Sharp-tipped and belching smoke, as it were, it resembled the holocaust at the end of a cosmic era. It was so vastly terrifying and irresistible that even Kāla himself could not stand before it. Rending and cutting, it was a terror to all beings.

[13–16] Surrounded in battle by many heroic *rākṣasas*, mighty Rāvaṇa, in a towering rage, grasped that lance in the middle. His eyes red with rage, the gigantic warrior raised the lance on high and roared frighteningly in battle, encouraging his forces. That terrifying roar of the *rākṣasa* lord caused the earth, the atmosphere, and the cardinal and intermediate directions to tremble. At that roar of the extremely loudly roaring and evil-minded *rākṣasa*, all beings were filled with terror and the sea grew tumultuous.

[17–22] Grasping his huge lance, the immensely powerful Rāvaṇa released a tremendous roar and spoke harshly to Rāma: “Wielded by me in my wrath, Rāma, this lance, hard as adamant, will instantly steal away your life breaths though you have your brother as an ally. Arrogant in battle though you be, this very day, striking you down, I shall quickly reduce you to the state of the *rākṣasa* heroes who have been slain in the forefront of battle. Stand your ground, Rāghava, for I shall now kill you with my lance!” When the overlord of the *rākṣasas* had spoken in this fashion, he hurled his lance. As it hurtled onward, Rāghava strove to stop it with hails of arrows, just as Vāsava might strive to suppress with torrents of rain the fire that blazes up at the end of a cosmic era. But Rāvaṇa’s great lance burned up the arrows loosed from Rāma’s bow, as a blazing fire might so many moths.

[23–30] When Rāghava saw his arrows shattered and reduced to ashes in the air by the impact of that lance, he was furious. In a towering rage, Rāghava, the delight of the Raghus, then took up a javelin that had been crafted for Vāsava, and which Mātali had brought. Hefted by that mighty warrior, the javelin, resounding with the sound of its bells, lit up the sky,

like a blazing meteor at the end of a cosmic era. Once hurled, it collided with the lance of the *rākṣasa* lord. Shattered by the javelin, the great lance fell, its blazing splendor dimmed. Then Rāma riddled Rāvaṇa's swift horses with arrows, arrows that were powerful, swift, hard as adamant, and sharp. Rāghava pierced Rāvaṇa in the chest with sharp arrows and again, concentrating his energies, through the forehead with three feathered shafts. His entire body pierced with arrows, gushing blood from every limb, the *rākṣasa* lord in the midst of that host looked like an *aśoka* tree in full bloom. His every limb riddled with Rāma's arrows and his body drenched with blood, the lord of the night-roaming *rākṣasas* grew weary there in the midst of his hosts, and he gave way to a towering rage.

Sarga 92

[1–3] Stricken in battle by Rāma in his wrath, Rāvaṇa, arrogant in battle, gave way to a towering rage. His eyes blazing with fury, that mighty warrior drew back his bow and, in his rage, assailed Rāghava in that ultimate battle. Rāvaṇa filled Rāma with his arrows, just as a storm cloud fills a pond with its thousands of arrowlike torrents of rain from the sky.

[4–9] Although riddled with a mass of arrows loosed from the bow in battle, Kākutstha, as unshakable as a mighty mountain, did not so much as tremble. Standing firm in battle, the mighty warrior slowed that mass of arrows with arrows of his own, so that he received them as if they were no more than rays of sunshine. [x]Then, enraged, the nimble-handed night-roaming *rākṣasa* sank thousands of arrows into great Rāghava's chest. Drenched with blood in battle, Lakṣmaṇa's elder brother looked like a great *kiṃśuka* tree in full bloom in the forest. Enraged by the blows of those arrows, immensely powerful Kākutstha, in turn, took up arrows whose radiance was like that of the sun at the end of a cosmic era. In their fury, neither Rāma nor Rāvaṇa could see the other in the midst of that battle, shrouded as it was in the darkness of their arrows.

[10–15] Then, suffused with rage, heroic Rāma, son of Daśaratha, laughed and spoke these harsh words to Rāvaṇa: "You are surely no hero, lowest of the *rākṣasas*, since you abducted my helpless wife from Janasthāna, behind my back. You forcibly abducted Vaidehī when she was alone in the vast forest, frightened without me to protect her. And now you think, 'Oh, what a great hero am I!' Great hero! Molester of other men's

wives! You commit contemptible acts against defenseless women and then think, 'Oh, what a great hero am I!' Violator of all boundaries! Shameless wretch! You are utterly lacking in character! Having brought death upon yourself, in your arrogance, you think, 'Oh, what a great hero am I!' Indeed, you, the heroic brother of Kubera, bestower of wealth, accompanied by your troops, have accomplished a great, praiseworthy, and glorious deed.

[16–22] "This very day, you shall receive the truly fitting reward for this evil and contemptible act that you committed in your arrogance. 'Oh, what a great hero am I,' that is how you think of yourself, evil-minded wretch, and yet you feel no shame for having carried off Sītā, as if you were a common thief. If you had dared to lay violent hands upon Sītā in my presence, you would have then and there joined your brother Khara, whom I had earlier slain with arrows. But now, evil-minded wretch, by my good fortune, you have come into my presence, and, this very day, with my sharp arrows, I shall convey you to the abode of Yama. This very day, carrion eaters will drag off your head, along with its glittering earrings, as it rolls in the dust of the battlefield, severed by my arrows. Let the vultures alight on your chest as you sprawl on the ground, Rāvaṇa, and thirstily drink the blood flowing from the wounds made by my arrowheads. This very day, as you lie dead riddled with my arrows, the carrion birds shall drag out your intestines, as eagles do serpents."

[23–26] Speaking in this fashion, Rāma, annihilator of his foes, pelted the *rākṣasa* lord, who stood nearby, with hails of arrows. Since he was so eager for the destruction of his enemy, Rāma's valor, strength, zeal for battle, and the power of his divine weapon-spells were all redoubled. All the divine weapon-spells then manifested themselves before that celebrated warrior. And in his excitement, that immensely powerful hero became still more nimble handed. Perceiving those auspicious signs within himself, Rāma, exterminator of the *rākṣasas*, pressed Rāvaṇa harder still.

[27–30] As ten-necked Rāvaṇa was being pelted by masses of stones from the tawny monkeys and by hails of arrows from Rāghava, his heart began to falter. Then, his heart faltering, he could no longer deploy his weapons, draw his bow, or counter Rāma's valor in any way. Even those arrows and various other weapons that he managed to deploy proved useless in battle—as he now approached the hour of his death. Seeing his

condition, Rāvaṇa's charioteer, who was controlling the chariot, kept his composure and slowly drove the chariot from the field of battle.

Sarga 93

[1–9] Furious in his delusion, his eyes red with rage, Rāvaṇa, impelled by the power of fate, now addressed his charioteer: "Fool! Acting on your own authority, you treat me with contempt, as if I were weak, incompetent, devoid of manliness, cowardly, a person of no consequence, bereft of blazing energy, utterly lacking powers of illusion, and stripped of divine weapon-spells. Why have you driven off my chariot in full view of the enemy, disregarding my wishes and treating me with contempt? For now, ignoble wretch, you have utterly undermined my fame—built up over long years—as well as my valor, blazing energy, and reputation. Though I am eager for battle, you have made me look like a coward in the eyes of an enemy famed for his martial power, one who deserves to be gratified with valorous deeds. In that you stupidly failed to drive the chariot forward, fool, my conjecture that you have been bribed by the enemy must be true. This is not the action of a friend who wishes one well. Indeed, it is more typical of one's enemies. What you have done is wrong. If you are my longtime friend or if you recall my many favors, then you must quickly turn the chariot around, before my enemy departs."

[10–13] Addressed harshly in this fashion by that fool, the charioteer, who wished his master well, addressed to Rāvaṇa these beneficial and conciliatory words: "I am not afraid, nor am I a fool. I have not been suborned by your enemies, nor am I derelict in my duties. I am not lacking in my affection for you, nor have I forgotten the favors you have bestowed. My heart overflowing with love for you, I did you this favor, which has so displeased you, out of a desire for your well-being and to preserve your reputation. In this matter, great king, you should not, like some lowly and ignoble person, find fault with me, who am devoted only to your pleasure and well-being.

[14–17] "Listen! I will tell you the reason that I turned the chariot back from the battle, as the current of a river is turned back by the rising tide. I perceived your exhaustion resulting from your mighty feats in battle. And, heroic warrior, I did not see your wonted enthusiasm and exuberance. Moreover, these chariot-horses, exhausted from drawing the chariot and

overcome by the heat, are as dejected as cattle battered by torrential rain. And given all the many portents that have appeared before us, I foresee no good outcome for us.

[18–23] “Moreover, a good charioteer when driving his chariot must be familiar with all of these things: the proper time and place, signs and gestures, and the despondency, exuberance, exhaustion, and relative strength and weakness of his master. He must also be familiar with the elevations and depressions of the terrain, where it is level and where it is uneven. He must know the proper time to fight and how to spot the weak points of the enemy. He must also know when to advance, when to pull back, when to stand his ground, and when to retreat. It was in order to alleviate this crushing fatigue and provide some respite for you as well as for the chariot-horses that I acted in this fitting manner. It was not on my own account, heroic warrior, that I drove the chariot off. I did this, my lord, since I was overwhelmed with love for you, my master. Command me as is proper. With my mind discharged of its obligations I shall do whatever you say, heroic slayer of your enemies.”

[24–27] Satisfied with the charioteer’s words, Rāvaṇa, lusting for battle, praised him profusely and said this: “Charioteer, turn this chariot immediately toward Rāghava! Rāvaṇa shall never turn back without first killing his enemies in battle.” Then, having spoken in this fashion, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, pleased, gave him a splendid and unequaled ring. Then, urged on by Rāvaṇa’s words, the charioteer swiftly drove the horses so that, within an instant, the great chariot of the *rākṣasa* lord stood before Rāma on the battlefield.

Sarga 94

[1–7] The king of men watched the chariot of the *rākṣasa* king as, with its great battle standard, it hurtled toward him with a tremendous din. It was yoked to black horses and glowed with a fearsome radiance. It was thick with pennants resembling streaks of lightning, and it displayed weapons that were like the weapons of Indra himself. It was pouring forth streams of arrows as a storm cloud might a torrential downpour. As he watched his enemy’s chariot, which looked like a great storm cloud and rumbled with the sound of a mountain being shattered by a lightning bolt, Rāma said to Mātali, the charioteer of thousand-eyed Indra: “Mātali! Observe my

enemy’s chariot as it hurtles furiously toward us. Since he is rushing toward me once more so rapidly on our right flank, he must now have determined to kill me. Therefore, remain vigilant and head for my enemy’s chariot for I wish to destroy him utterly, as a strong wind does a cloud that has newly formed. Now keeping firm control of the reins, drive the chariot forward—swiftly, boldly, calmly, and with a steady heart and eye. Granted, as someone well familiar with this chariot of Indra, the smasher of citadels, you are not in need of instruction. But single-mindedly eager for battle as I am, I am merely reminding you, not giving you instruction.”

[8–11] Gratified with that speech of Rāma, Mātali, foremost of the charioteers of the gods, drove his chariot onward. Then, keeping Rāvaṇa’s great chariot on his right, Mātali discomfited him with the dust raised by his own wheels. Then, with his arrows, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, infuriated, his eyes red and wide with rage, assailed Rāma, who faced him in his chariot. Provoked by this assault, Rāma, endowed with great blazing energy, in his rage put patience aside, and there, in that battle, took up the enormously powerful bow of Indra, along with arrows and with a radiance equal to that of the sun’s rays.

[12–16] Then began the battle between the two of them, who, each intent on killing the other, resembled two proud lions face to face. Anxious for the destruction of Rāvaṇa, the gods, together with the *gandharvas*, the perfected beings, and the great seers, assembled to watch that chariot duel. Terrifying and hair-raising omens now appeared. They presaged destruction for Rāvaṇa and victory for Rāghava. It rained blood over Rāvaṇa’s chariot, and fierce whirlwinds arose, circling to the left. A vast flock of vultures, wheeling in the sky, raced after his chariot whichever way it went.

[17–21] Laṅkā was shrouded in an untimely twilight as crimson as a *japā* blossom, and, even in bright daylight, the very ground appeared to be ablaze. Huge meteors flew past with a thunderous sound, accompanied by violent gusts of wind. Then, as they were clearly ominous for Rāvaṇa, they plunged the *rākṣasas* into despair. The earth trembled wherever Rāvaṇa went, and, as the *rākṣasas* prepared to strike, it seemed as if something held back their arms. As the rays of the sun—red and yellow, pallid and bright white—played across Rāvaṇa’s body, they looked like veins of variegated ores on a mountainside. Jackals, shadowed by vultures, howled angrily and

inauspiciously, spewing flames from their mouths while staring him in the face.

[22–29] The wind blew directly in the face of the *rākṣasa* king, whipping up dust across the battlefield and blinding him. From every side, Indra's terrible thunderbolts fell upon his army with an unbearable sound. And yet, there was no rumbling of storm clouds. All directions—both cardinal and intermediate—were shrouded in darkness. A huge dust storm made the sky itself impossible to see. In a fearsome assault upon his chariot, dreadful *sārika* birds swooped down by the hundreds with dreadful cries. His horses incessantly shed blazing sparks from their hindquarters and tears from their eyes so that they poured forth both fire and water equally. Indeed, many dreadful portents of this type appeared, foretelling great danger and presaging Rāvaṇa's destruction. But in the case of Rāma, favorable and auspicious portents arose on every side, presaging his victory. Observing on the battlefield those portents that augured well for him, Rāghava, skilled in interpreting portents, was excited, and, supremely happy, he redoubled his valor in battle.

Sarga 95

[1–5] Then the great battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa commenced, a fierce chariot duel that terrified all the worlds. Both the *rākṣasa* army and the vast host of tawny monkeys stood motionless, clutching their weapons. As they watched those two mighty warriors—man and *rākṣasa*—engaged in battle, their attention was riveted, and all of them were struck with the greatest amazement. Although their hands were filled with all sorts of weapons, their minds were filled with astonishment. Thus, they stood there gazing at that battle and struck no blows at one another. With the *rākṣasas* gazing at Rāvaṇa and the monkeys at Rāma, both armies, their eyes wide with astonishment, seemed frozen as if in a painting.

[6–10] Observing those various portents, Rāghava and Rāvaṇa, grimly determined and fixed in their enmity, fought on, unafraid. Kākutstha thought, "I will surely win," while Rāvaṇa realized, "I must surely die." Then those two resolute warriors displayed their utmost valor in battle. Then, in anger, mighty ten-necked Rāvaṇa nocked his arrows and, taking aim at the battle standard on Rāghava's chariot, let them fly. But those arrows never reached the battle standard on the chariot of Indra, smasher of

citadels. Instead, merely brushing the chariot-javelin, they fell to the ground. In turn, mighty Rāma drew his bow in anger and resolved to return blow for blow.

[11–14] Taking aim at Rāvaṇa's battle standard, he loosed a sharp arrow that, glowing with its own blazing energy, was as impossible to withstand as a mighty serpent. After cutting down the battle standard of ten-necked Rāvaṇa, the arrow came to rest on the ground. Cut down, the battle standard of Rāvaṇa's chariot likewise fell to the ground. Upon witnessing the destruction of his battle standard, immensely powerful Rāvaṇa seemed to blaze up on the battlefield with a fire born of anger. In an uncontrollable rage, Rāvaṇa poured forth an immense hail of arrows and, with those arrows, riddled Rāma's celestial horses.

[15–20] Riddled though they were, the bay steeds never stumbled or swerved. They remained as serene at heart as if they had been stroked with lotus stalks. Seeing that the horses had been utterly unaffected, Rāvaṇa, in a towering rage, once more loosed a hail of arrows. He also hurled maces, iron clubs, discuses, cudgels, mountain peaks, and trees, as well as lances and battle-axes. His heart and energies unflagging, he continued to loose his arrows by the thousands, and that hail of weapons that he let fly was invested with the power of illusion. It was tremendous and deafening and consisted of innumerable weapons. It was fearsome and reverberated fearsomely in the midst of the battle. It was unendurable, and it sowed panic everywhere. Missing Rāghava's chariot, it fell upon the monkey host from every side. But ten-necked Rāvaṇa, with unbroken concentration, continued to loose his arrows so that he quickly filled the entire atmosphere with them.

[21–26] But Kākutstha, watching Rāvaṇa exert himself with such concentration in battle, smiled faintly and nocked sharp arrows. Then, in that battle, he loosed hundreds of thousands of arrows. Seeing them, Rāvaṇa filled the entire sky with arrows of his own. By virtue of that blazing hail of arrows discharged by the two warriors, it looked as if there were a second shining sky composed entirely of arrows. As long as Rāma and Rāvaṇa discharged their arrows in that battle, not one of those arrows failed to hit its precise mark, caused excessive damage, or failed to achieve its intended purpose. The two heroes fought on without respite, shooting left and right. With their torrents of arrows, they seemed to leave no room

even for air in the sky. Rāma struck Rāvaṇa’s horses, and Rāvaṇa struck Rāma’s. Thus did the two of them strike at each other, trading blow and counterblow.

Sarga 96

[1–5] All beings watched with amazement in their hearts as Rāma and Rāvaṇa fought on in this fashion on the battleground. Each pressing the other hard in battle and intent on slaying each other, the two splendid chariot-warriors assumed terrifying forms. Their charioteers demonstrated the various movements exemplary of their skill as drivers—driving in circles and in straight lines, advancing and retreating. Pressing each other hard—Rāma, Rāvaṇa; and Rāvaṇa, Rāghava—the two of them advanced and retreated at tremendous speed. And as the two of them loosed their hails of arrows, their splendid chariots moved across the battlefield like two storm clouds unleashing torrential rains.

[6–10] Then, when they had demonstrated their various moves on the battlefield, they once again took up their positions facing each other. And as the two chariots stood there, their yoke poles and battle standards brushed each other and their horses stood face to face. But then, with four sharp arrows loosed from his bow, Rāma drove off Rāvaṇa’s four fiery steeds. The night-roaming *rākṣasa* flew into an uncontrollable rage over the flight of his horses and loosed sharp arrows at Rāghava. Although he was completely riddled by powerful ten-necked Rāvaṇa, Rāghava seemed unaffected and showed no signs of pain.

[11–14] So then the night-roaming *rākṣasa*, taking aim at the charioteer of Indra, wielder of the *vajra*, once again loosed arrows that roared with the crash of thunderbolts. But although they fell upon Mātali’s body in battle, those immensely powerful arrows caused neither the slightest distraction nor pain. Enraged at that attack upon Mātali as he had never been at those upon himself, Rāghava made his enemy recoil with a mass of arrows. Mighty Rāghava then loosed his arrows—twenty, thirty, sixty, and then by the hundreds and by the thousands—upon his enemy’s chariot.

[15–19] The seven seas themselves were thrown into turmoil by the sounds of maces, cudgels, and iron clubs, and by the winds stirred up by the fletching of the arrows. Since the seas were thrown into turmoil, all the thousands of great serpents and *dānavas* who dwelt in the underworld

Pātāla were terrified. The whole earth, together with its mountains, groves, and forests, shook. The sun, bringer of light, grew dim and the winds ceased to blow. Then all the gods, together with the *gandharvas*, perfected beings, great seers, *kinnaras*, and great serpents, were plunged into anxiety, praying: "May all be well with cows and brahmans! May the worlds endure forever! May Rāghava be victorious in battle over Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*."

[20–24] Then, in anger, great-armed Rāma, increaser of the glory of the Raghus, placed on his bow a razor-tipped arrow that was like a venomous serpent. With it, he cut off Rāvaṇa's majestic head, together with its shining earrings. As the three worlds looked on, that head fell to the ground. But a new head exactly like it emerged from Rāvaṇa. Then, with his arrows, quick-handed Rāma, acting quickly, quickly cut off that second head of Rāvaṇa in battle. But no sooner had that head been severed than yet another appeared in its place. And so, with arrows that were like thunderbolts, Rāma cut off that one as well. And so in this way, a hundred heads—all exactly alike—were cut off. But still, there seemed to be no way to bring about the end of Rāvaṇa's life.

[25–31] Therefore, although valorous Rāghava, increaser of Kausalyā's joy, was expert in the use of every divine weapon-spell and still had many arrows, he fell to brooding: "These are all the very same arrows upon which I have always relied in battle and with which I killed Mārīca and Khara along with Dūṣaṇa. They are the very ones with which I killed Virādha in the Krauñca forest and Kabandha in the forest of the Daṇḍakas. Why then are they so ineffectual against Rāvaṇa?" Although he was consumed with brooding in this fashion, Rāghava kept up his guard in battle and continued to rain hails of arrows upon Rāvaṇa's chest. Meanwhile, Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, was in a rage, and, mounted in his chariot, he assailed Rāma in battle with a hail of maces and cudgels. The great battle raged all night long as the gods, *dānavas*, *yakṣas*, *piśācas*, great serpents, and *rākṣasas* looked on. Indeed, the duel between Rāma and Rāvaṇa continued night and day without stopping for an hour or even a moment.

Sarga 97

[1–2] But then Mātali reminded Rāghava: "Why, hero, do you merely match him blow for blow, as if you knew no better? In order to kill him, my

lord, you must unleash upon him the divine weapon of Grandfather Brahmā. For the moment ordained by the gods for his destruction is now at hand.”

[3–13] Reminded by Mātali’s words, Rāma took up a blazing arrow that, as he did so, made a hissing sound like that of a snake. Presented to him earlier by the powerful and holy seer Agastya, it was a gift of Brahmā. It was a mighty arrow, unfailing in battle. Brahmā, whose power is immeasurable, had fashioned it long ago for the sake of Indra and had presented it to that lord of the gods, who was eager to conquer the three worlds. Pavana, the wind god, resided in its feathers. Agni, the purifier, and Sūrya, bringer of light, were in its arrowhead. Its shaft was made of all of space, and the mountains Meru and Mandara lent it their weight. Radiant with its splendor, beautifully fletched, and adorned with gold, it was fashioned with the blazing energy of all the elements, and it was as brilliant as Sūrya, bringer of light. It looked like the smoking fire of universal destruction and glistened like a venomous snake. It could instantaneously shatter hosts of chariots, elephants, and horses. It could shatter gateways, together with their iron beams, and even mountains. With its shaft drenched with the blood of many different creatures and smeared with their marrow, it was truly frightful. Hard as adamant and roaring deafeningly, it was terrifying in every sort of battle. Dreadful, hissing like a serpent, it inspired terror in all beings. It was fearsome and looked like Yama. In battle, it provided a never-ending supply of food to flocks of vultures and adjutant storks as well as *rākṣasas* and packs of jackals. Fletched with the various feathers of Garuḍa—beautiful and variegated—it brought joy to the monkey chiefs and despair to the *rākṣasas*. That ultimate arrow, which robbed one’s enemies of their glory but brought joy to oneself, was to encompass the destruction of that menace to the Ikṣvākus and indeed to all the worlds.

[14–18] Then immensely powerful and mighty Rāma consecrated that arrow with *mantras* and placed it on his bow in the manner prescribed by the science of archery. Filled with fury toward Rāvaṇa and exerting himself to the utmost, he bent the bow fully and loosed that arrow, which struck at one’s vital points. As unstoppable as the *vajra* hurled by Indra, the *vajra* wielder, and as inescapable as fate, it fell upon Rāvaṇa’s chest. Loosed with tremendous force, that lethal arrow pierced evil-minded Rāvaṇa’s heart.

Drenched with blood, the lethal arrow swiftly entered the earth, carrying off the life breaths of Rāvaṇa.

[19–22] Once the arrow had accomplished its purpose in killing Rāvaṇa, it dutifully returned to its quiver, glistening with its still-wet blood. Meanwhile, the bow and arrows of him who had been struck down so suddenly slipped from his grasp, along with his life breaths, as he lay dying. Thus did the lord of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, once so fearsome in his power and dazzling in his splendor, now tumble lifeless to the ground from his chariot, like Vṛtra struck down by Indra's *vajra.* Seeing him fallen to the ground, the surviving night-roaming *rākṣasas*, their lord slain, fled, terrified, in all directions.

[23–28] Meanwhile, the monkeys, armed with trees, seeing that Rāghava was victorious and that ten-necked Rāvaṇa had been slain, roared loudly and fell upon the *rākṣasas*. Hard-pressed by the jubilant monkeys, the *rākṣasas* fled in fear to Laṅkā, their piteous faces drenched with tears over the death of their protector. Then the jubilant monkeys, with a victorious air, roared loudly, proclaiming Rāghava's victory and the death of Rāvaṇa. The auspicious war drums of the thirty gods then resounded in the sky, and a pleasant breeze blew, wafting a divine fragrance. An extraordinary and delightful shower of blossoms fell from the sky to the earth, covering Rāghava's chariot. And from the great gods in heaven a magnificent shout, filled with the praise of Rāghava, was heard, "Excellent! Excellent!"

[29–33] Now that fearsome Rāvaṇa, the terror of all the worlds, had been slain, great exultation filled the gods and celestial bards. In slaying that bull among *rākṣasas*, Rāghava, delighted, had fulfilled the wishes of Sugrīva and immensely powerful Aṅgada. The hosts of the Maruts regained tranquility. The directions were limpid, and the sky grew clear. The earth ceased its trembling, and the winds blew gently, while the sun, the maker of day, shone with a steady light. Then Rāghava's closest allies—Sugrīva, Vibhīṣaṇa, and the rest—together with Lakṣmaṇa, gathered around him, rejoicing in his victory and, with all due ceremony, paid homage to him who was so magnificent in battle. Having thus slain his enemy, the immensely powerful hero, the delight of the king of the Raghu dynasty, proved true to his vow. Surrounded by his kinsman and his troops there on the field of battle, he looked as resplendent as Indra surrounded by the hosts of the thirty gods.

Sarga 98

[1–5] Now, when the *rākṣasa* women heard that Rāvaṇa had been slain by great Rāghava, they rushed from the inner apartments, overwhelmed with grief. Although many tried to restrain them, they rolled in the dust of the earth, their hair flying loose. They were as stricken with grief as cows whose calves have been butchered. Together with the *rākṣasas* they poured out through the northern gate and entered the ghastly battlefield, searching for their slain lord. Crying, "My husband!" "Alas, my lord!" on every side, they wandered about the battleground, which was strewn with headless trunks and thick with bloody mire. Overcome with grief for their lord, their eyes filled with tears, they cried, shrieking like elephant cows when the leader of their herd is slain.

[6–10] Then they saw Rāvaṇa lying slain on the ground. With his huge body, his tremendous strength, and his vast splendor, he resembled a mass of black collyrium. When they suddenly spied their husband lying in the dust of the battlefield, they fell upon his limbs like forest creepers that have been cut down. One of them embraced him in her devotion and wept. One clasped his feet, while yet another clung to his neck. Raising her arms, one rolled on the ground. Seeing the face of her dead husband, yet another fainted. One placed his head on her lap and, gazing on his face, wept, so that his face was bathed with tears, as is a lotus with dewdrops.

[11–16] Thus, anguished at seeing their lord Rāvaṇa lying slain on the ground, they keened in various ways in their grief and then began to lament once more: "He who once terrorized Śakra and even Yama, he who robbed King Kubera Vaiśravaṇa of his flying palace Puṣpaka, and he who sowed tremendous fear among the *gandharvas*, seers, and the great gods, now lies slain in battle. He who knew no fear from the *asuras*, gods, or great serpents had much to fear from a mere human. He who was invulnerable to the gods, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas* now lies on the battlefield, slain by a mere human fighting on foot. He whom neither the gods, the *yakṣas*, nor the *asuras* could kill has, like some feeble creature, been slain by a mere mortal."

[17–26] Speaking in this fashion, Rāvaṇa's women wept copiously. Then, overcome by grief, they began once more to lament repeatedly: "Since you consistently refused to heed the words of your friends, who advised you for your own good, all of us and you yourself have now been

ruined all together. Although your dear brother Vibhīṣaṇa was speaking words that were beneficial to you, you, in your delusion, abused him cruelly, desiring, it appears, your own destruction. If only you had restored Sītā Maithilī to Rāma, this immense catastrophe, this total extermination, would not have befallen us. Your brother Vibhīṣaṇa would have had his wish fulfilled, and Rāma would have become an ally of our House. None of us would have been widowed, nor would your enemies have seen their wish fulfilled. But instead, in holding Sītā by force, cruel Rāvaṇa, you have destroyed the *rākṣasas*, us, and yourself, all three at the same time. Nonetheless, it is true, bull among *rākṣasas*, that this was not an action taken of your own free will. For it is fate that sets all things in motion. Whatever is destroyed, is destroyed by fate. And so the destruction in battle of the monkeys, the *rākṣasas*, and you yourself, great-armed warrior, occurred through the power of fate. For in this world the relentless march of fate cannot be stopped by wealth or act of will, by valor or by imperious command." Thus did the wretched women of the *rākṣasa* lord lament, afflicted with grief, their eyes clouded with tears, shrieking like ospreys.

Sarga 99

[1–4] Now, even as the *rākṣasa* women were lamenting in this fashion, Rāvaṇa's beloved senior-most wife, Mandodarī, gazed on her husband in her sorrow. And as pitiable Mandodarī gazed there upon her husband, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, who had been slain by Rāma of inconceivable deeds, she lamented: "Surely, great-armed younger brother of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, even Indra himself, the smasher of citadels, feared to stand before you when you were angry. And surely it was because of your power that the seers, the gods on earth, the illustrious *gandharvas*, and the celestial bards fled in all directions.

[5–9] "Yet now you have been vanquished in battle by Rāma, a mere human. Are you not ashamed, your majesty? How could this be, bull among *rākṣasas*? How could a mere human, a wanderer in the wilderness, have slain you, who had conquered the three worlds, who was endowed with majesty and might, and whom no one could withstand? It makes no sense that Rāma could have slain you in battle—you who could wander in realms inaccessible to mere mortals and could take on any form at will. I do not believe that it was, in fact, Rāma who accomplished this feat in vanquishing

you in the vanguard of the hosts when you were fully equipped for battle. Instead, it was your sensual appetites alone that vanquished you, since they recalled, as it were, your hostility when, long ago—before you conquered the three worlds—you subjugated your senses.

[10–16] "Or perhaps it was Vāsava himself who came here in the form of Rāma, putting forth some unimaginable power of illusion in order to destroy you. For when in Janasthāna he killed your brother Khara, who was surrounded by many *rākṣasas*, it was clear right then that this was no mere human. And when, through his might, Hanumān entered the city of Laṅkā, which even the gods could not enter, we were all deeply shaken. When I told you, 'You should make peace with Rāghava,' you would not listen. And this is the result that has come of it. Unaccountably, bull among *rākṣasas*, you conceived this desire for Sītā, which has only led to the loss of your sovereignty, your kinsmen, and your life. You acted utterly improperly, you fool, when you assaulted Sītā, who is worthy of respect and who is superior even to Arundhatī and Rohiṇī. This Maithilī is in no way my superior or even my equal in breeding, beauty, or talent. But in your infatuation you did not realize this.

[17–20] "No creature ever dies without a reason. In your case, then, your death has been brought about because of your treatment of Maithilī. Now Maithilī, free from all sorrow, will enjoy herself with Rāma, while I, a person of little merit that I am, have been plunged into a dreadful ocean of sorrow. I, who used to enjoy myself with you on Mount Kailāsa, Mount Mandara, Mount Meru, the Caitraratha garden, and in all the gardens of the gods, traveling in unparalleled splendor in a flying chariot befitting our station, wearing marvelous garlands and garments, and gazing out upon the many different lands, have now, because of your death, hero, been robbed of the enjoyment of all pleasures.

[21–24] "The destruction of the principal *rākṣasas*, which my illustrious brother-in-law Vibhīṣaṇa, a speaker of truth, foretold, has now come to pass. Through this catastrophe born of your lust and anger and characterized by your obsession, you have deprived the entire *rākṣasa* race of its protector. I really should not grieve for you, for you were a warrior famed for strength and manly valor. But still, because of the inherent nature of women, my heart is in a pitiable state. Taking with you both the good and the evil deeds you performed, you have gone to your proper destination. It

is for myself that I grieve, miserable as I am, because of my separation from you.

[25–29] "Resembling a black storm cloud, with your yellow garments and bright armlets, why do you lie here drenched in blood, splaying out all your limbs? I am overcome with sorrow. Why do you not answer me, as if you were asleep? Why do you not look at me, the granddaughter of an immensely powerful and skillful *yātudhāna* who never fled in battle? You always used to worship your iron club, adorned with a fretwork of gold and, with a radiance like that of the sun, as if it were the *vajra* of Indra, the wielder of the *vajra*. With it you used to slaughter your enemies in battle. But now that smasher of your foes in battle, shattered by arrows, lies scattered in a thousand pieces. Curse me whose heart, oppressed by sorrow, does not shatter into a thousand pieces now that you have returned to the five elements."

[30–34] At this juncture, Rāma said to Vibhīṣaṇa, "Perform the funerary rites for your brother and send these women back." When he had heard those words, Vibhīṣaṇa, who was deferential and understood righteousness, reflected and, in order to conform to Rāma's wishes, replied with words that were filled with righteousness and political sense: "I cannot perform the funerary rites for someone who abandoned both righteousness and his vows, who was cruel, heartless, and untruthful, and who assaulted the wives of others. Ever intent on injuring all creatures, he was my enemy in the form of a brother. So, although he should be respected because of the deference one owes to one's elders, still Rāvaṇa does not merit respect. In this world, people will say I am heartless, Rāma, but once they hear about his qualities, they will all say that I acted properly."

[35–40] Upon hearing that, Rāma, foremost of those who upheld righteousness, was greatly pleased, and, skilled in speech, he said this to Vibhīṣaṇa, who was similarly expert in speech: "I really ought to do what pleases you, since it was through your might that I have been victorious. Nonetheless, I must address you with regard to what is proper, lord of the *rākṣasas*. Granted, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* was given to unrighteousness and untruthfulness. Nonetheless, he was always a powerful and energetic hero in battle. Rāvaṇa, who made the worlds cry out, was a great hero, endowed with might. One never heard that the gods, led by Indra of the hundred sacrifices, ever defeated him. But hostilities cease with death. Our

purpose has been accomplished. You may now perform his funerary rites, for as he was to you, so he is to me. For he deserves a quick and proper funeral at your hands, great-armed knower of righteousness. Thus, you will reap glory."

[41–44] Having heard Rāghava's words, Vibhīṣaṇa, hastening, provided Rāvaṇa with a fitting funeral. Vibhīṣaṇa then consigned him to the purifying fire according to the ritual prescriptions. Then, speaking soothing words again and again, he consoled the women. And then, once all the *rākṣasa* women had gone back, Vibhīṣaṇa came to Rāma's side and stood there humbly. Then, having slain his mortal enemy, Rāma, together with his army, Sugrīva, and Lakṣmaṇa, attained as much delight as did Indra of the hundred sacrifices after slaying Vṛtra.

Sarga 100

[1–5] When the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas* had witnessed the slaying of Rāvaṇa, they departed, each in his own flying chariot, proclaiming those auspicious events. Proclaiming the frightful slaying of Rāvaṇa, the valor of Rāghava, the brave fighting of the monkeys, the counsel of Sugrīva, and the devotion and heroism of Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri, those noble beings, in great delight, departed as they had come. But as for noble Rāghava, he released the celestial chariot, radiant as fire, that Indra had loaned him and paid homage to Mātali. Granted leave by Rāghava, Mātali, the charioteer of Śakra, mounted that celestial chariot and ascended into the sky.

[6–10] Once that foremost of the charioteers of the gods had ascended into the sky, Rāghava embraced Sugrīva with the greatest delight. After embracing Sugrīva, he returned to the army's encampment, reverently saluted by Lakṣmaṇa and honored by the foremost of the tawny monkeys. And then Rāma spoke to mighty Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri, of blazing energy, who stood beside him: "Gentle brother, you must consecrate Vibhīṣaṇa in the kingship of Laṅkā, for he has been loyal and devoted and has rendered me great assistance. For this is my most cherished desire, gentle brother: that I should see Rāvaṇa's younger brother Vibhīṣaṇa consecrated in the kingship of Laṅkā."

[11–15] Addressed in this fashion by great Rāghava, Saumitri replied, "So be it," and, greatly delighted, he brought a golden vessel. Then, in the midst of the *rākṣasas*, at Rāma's command, Saumitri used that vessel to

consecrate Vibhīṣaṇa as king in Lañkā. Thus did that righteous hero consecrate pure-minded Vibhīṣaṇa, while the latter's ministers and those *rākṣasas* who were devoted to him rejoiced. Upon seeing the lord of the *rākṣasas*, Vibhīṣaṇa, consecrated in the kingship of Lañkā, Rāghava, together with Lakṣmaṇa, experienced the greatest delight. When he had received that great kingdom, which Rāma had conferred upon him, Vibhīṣaṇa comforted his people and then approached Rāma.

[16–22] In great delight, the night-roaming *rākṣasas* of the city then brought unhusked rice, sweetmeats, parched grain, and celestial flowers for him. When he had received all those auspicious offerings, the unassailable and mighty hero presented them in an auspicious fashion to Rāghava and Lakṣmaṇa. And Rāma, seeing that Vibhīṣaṇa had accomplished his purpose and was now endowed with prosperity, accepted it all, merely out of a desire to please him. Rāghava then spoke these words to the leaping monkey, mighty Hanumān, as huge as a mountain, who stood beside him, his hands cupped in reverence: "My gentle friend, after obtaining permission of the great king Vibhīṣaṇa, you must enter Rāvaṇa's palace. Once there, foremost among the victorious, you are to humbly approach Vaidehī and inform her that Sugrīva, Lakṣmaṇa, and I are well, and that I have slain Rāvaṇa. Lord of the tawny monkeys, once you have related the good news to Maithilī, please take a message from her and return."

Sarga 101

[1–6] Instructed in this fashion and honored by the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, Hanumān, son of Māruta, entered the city of Lañkā. Entering Rāvaṇa's palace, that hero of immense blazing energy spied Sītā, who resembled the constellation Rohiṇī cut off from her lord, the hare-marked moon, and occluded by a malevolent planet. Modest, humble, and deferential, he approached her, greeted her respectfully, and began to tell her everything that Rāma had said: "Rāma is quite well, Vaidehī, as are Sugrīva and Lakṣmaṇa. Having slain his foe and having thus accomplished his purpose, that tamer of his enemies inquires after your well-being. With Vibhīṣaṇa as his ally and together with the tawny monkeys, Rāma, through the wise counsel of Lakṣmaṇa, has slain Rāvaṇa, O queen. Inquiring as to your well-being, the mighty hero Rāma, delight of the Raghus, greatly delighted, his heart having achieved its purpose, now says this to you:

[7–11] “ ‘I bring you this good news, my lady, and once again I offer you my respectful salutations. Thank god, O knower of righteousness, you have survived by virtue of my victory in battle. We have gained victory, Sītā. You may now be at ease and free from care. My enemy Rāvaṇa has been slain, and Laṅkā is under my control. With grim determination to win you back, without pause even for sleep, I built a bridge across the mighty ocean and thus fulfilled my vow. Nor should you have any further anxiety about staying in Rāvaṇa’s palace, for the lordship of Laṅkā has now been made over to Vibhīṣaṇa. So, trusting in that, be comforted. For now you are living in your own home, as it were. Moreover, in great delight, he is on his way, eager to see you.’ ”

[12–18] Addressed in this fashion, Sītā, whose face was like the hare-marked moon, sprang to her feet, speechless with joy. Since Sītā did not reply, that foremost of the tawny monkeys said: “What are you worried about, O queen? Why do you not speak to me?” Addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, Sītā, so firmly grounded in righteousness, replied in the greatest delight with a voice that was choked with joy: “When I heard the wonderful news concerning my husband’s victory, I was overwhelmed with joy and momentarily speechless. Even upon reflection, leaping monkey, I can think of no adequate response to you who have brought me this wonderful news. Nor, gentle monkey, can I think of anything on this earth to give you for reporting this news—so wonderful for me—that would be fitting and adequate. Neither gold nor silver, various gems, or even the kingship over the three worlds can be said to equal this.”

[19–22] Addressed in this fashion by Sītā Vaidehī, the leaping monkey cupped his hands in reverence and, standing before her, replied with these words: “You alone are capable of speaking such affectionate words, you who are so devoted to your husband’s welfare and have longed so for his victory. Indeed, these words of yours, gentle lady, so affectionate and full of meaning, are more precious to me than a heap of all kinds of jewels or even the kingship of the gods. In that I see Rāma still standing after having slain his enemy and gained victory, I have truly already attained those treasured things, such as the kingship of the gods, and the like.

[23–28] “However, if you permit me, I should like to kill all these *rākṣasa* women who previously threatened you. Please grant me this wish. These cruel and horrible *rākṣasa* women with their dreadful rumors, their

fierce glances, and terrifying threats, tormented you, who are so devoted to your husband, when you were suffering in the *aśoka* grove. I would really like to slaughter them with different types of blows. Illustrious and lovely queen, these creatures have done you such injury. [y]I would like to slaughter them with punches, slaps, kicks, fearsome blows of the knees, slashes of my fangs, biting off their ears and noses, tearing out their hair, violent clawing, dreadful flying kicks, and many more of these kinds of assaults."

[29–32] Addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, the illustrious Vaidehī, daughter of Janaka, responded to him in words that were in keeping with righteousness: "Who, foremost of monkeys, could be angry at servant women, for, as mere functionaries and dependent on the king, they are obedient and act only on the orders of another. It is as a consequence of my evil destiny and my own misdeeds in the past that I have suffered all of this. For one always experiences the fruits of one's actions. I have concluded that I had to suffer this as a consequence of my fate, and, being helpless, I had to endure all of this here at the hands of Rāvaṇa's servant women.

[33–37] "These *rākṣasa* women tormented me only on the orders of Rāvaṇa. Now that he has been slain, foremost of monkeys, they will not torment me anymore. There is an ancient verse in keeping with righteousness that a bear once recited in the presence of a tiger. Hear it now from me, leaping monkey: 'A superior person never requites evil on the part of evildoers with evil.' This rule of conduct must always be adhered to. For good conduct is the ornament of the virtuous. A noble person must act compassionately whether people are wicked, virtuous, or even if deserving of death. For, leaping monkey, no one is entirely innocent. One should not harm the *rākṣasas*, who can take on any form at will and take pleasure in injuring people, even when they do evil."

[38–43] When he was addressed in this fashion by Rāma's illustrious wife, Sītā, eloquent Hanumān replied to her: "You are a fitting, illustrious, and righteous wife to Rāma. Please give me your return message, queen, and I shall go to where Rāghava is." When Vaidehī, Janaka's daughter, had been addressed in this fashion, she said, "Foremost of monkeys, I wish to see my husband." When Hanumān, son of Pavana, had heard those words of hers, that immensely splendid hero said these words, lifting Maithilī's spirits: "Noble lady, just as the goddess Śacī gazes upon Indra, lord of the thirty gods, you shall gaze upon Rāma, whose face is like the full moon,

whose allies are staunch, whose enemies have been slain, and who is accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa.” When he had spoken in this fashion to Sītā, who was as radiant as Śrī incarnate, the immensely swift Hanumān returned to where Rāghava waited.

Sarga 102

[1–7] Approaching the exceedingly wise Rāma, foremost of all bowmen, the leaping monkey, who understood the matter at hand, addressed him with these words: “Now you really must see Queen Maithilī, who has been tormented with grief, she on whose account we undertook this entire mission and achieved the culmination of our efforts. For Maithilī, who had been overwhelmed with grief, her eyes brimming with tears, was filled with joy upon hearing of your victory. Since she trusted me because of the confidence I had earlier inspired in her, she said to me, ‘I desire to see my husband, who, together with Lakṣmaṇa, has accomplished his purpose.’ ” [z]Addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, Rāma, foremost among upholders of righteousness, was suddenly plunged into gloomy thought and became somewhat tearful. Heaving long, hot sighs and staring at the ground, he spoke to Vibhīṣaṇa, who stood beside him, looking like a great storm cloud: [aa]“Have Sītā Vaidehī come here anointed with celestial unguents, adorned with celestial ornaments, her hair freshly washed. Make haste!”

[8–12] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, Vibhīṣaṇa, hurrying, entered the inner apartments and there had his own wives instruct Sītā in these words: “Vaidehī, anointed with celestial unguents and adorned with celestial ornaments, you are to mount a carriage. For, bless you, your husband desires to see you.” Addressed in this fashion, Vaidehī replied to Vibhīṣaṇa: “But I wish to see my husband without having bathed, lord of the *rākṣasas*.” When Vibhīṣaṇa heard those words of hers, he replied, “You should do exactly as your husband, Rāma, says.” Upon hearing those words of his, virtuous Maithilī, whose husband was her god and whose vow was devotion to him, responded, “So be it.”

[13–16] Young women then washed her hair and adorned her with costly garments and ornaments. Then Vibhīṣaṇa took Sītā with him, after having had her mount a shining palanquin that was draped in costly fabrics and guarded by many *rākṣasas*. Approaching the great man and noting that he was lost in brooding thought, he bowed and, in great delight, announced

that Sītā had come. But when Rāghava heard that she who had dwelt so long in the *rākṣasa*'s house had come, three emotions—joy, sorrow, and anger—took hold of him.

[17–22] Then, perceiving that Vibhīṣaṇa now stood beside him, Rāghava, miserable and debating inwardly, spoke to him, "Gentle lord of the *rākṣasas*, ever dedicated to my victory, please bring Vaidehī to me at once." Heeding those words of Rāghava, Vibhīṣaṇa quickly made an effort to have the area cleared on every side. Guards, wearing mail and turbans and holding staves and drums in their hands, began to move about there, clearing the area on every side. Then, being driven back on every side, the crowds of apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas* withdrew to a distance. And as they were all being driven back, there arose a sound like the roar of the ocean being whipped up by a gale.

[23–29] But when Rāghava saw them being driven back in great agitation on all sides, he stopped it out of kindness and because he could not abide it. Furious, Rāma spoke reproachful words to the immensely wise Vibhīṣaṇa, seeming almost to burn him up with his eyes: "Why are you harassing these people with complete disregard for my wishes? Stop this business at once. These people are like my own kin. It is not houses, garments, high walls, curtains, or such royal treatment as this that shields a woman; it is her virtuous conduct alone. Moreover, there is nothing wrong with a woman being seen in public during emergencies, periods of hardship, in time of war, at a ceremony of choosing her husband, during a sacrifice, or at a wedding ceremony. She has been through a war and has been placed in tremendous hardship. Therefore, there would be nothing wrong in her being seen publicly, especially in my company. So bring her into my presence at once, Vibhīṣaṇa. Let Sītā see me surrounded by the hosts of my friends."

[30–32] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, Vibhīṣaṇa, reflecting on all of this, obediently led Sītā into his presence. And as for Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva, and the leaping monkey Hanumān, they too became deeply troubled upon hearing Rāma's words. Because of his demeanor that was so pitiless and seemed to show no regard for his wife, they inferred that Rāghava was displeased with Sītā.

[33–36] Trying to make her body appear small in her shame, Maithilī, followed by Vibhīṣaṇa, approached her husband. Covering her face with her garment in her shame there before the assembled people, she wept as she

came near her husband, murmuring, “My noble husband.” She whose husband was her divinity and whose face was more radiant than the moon gazed upon the moonlike face of her husband with amazement, joy, and love. Then, gazing upon her beloved’s face, which she had not seen for so long and which was as lovely as the full moon rising, she shed her depression of spirit and her face became as radiant as the hare-marked moon.

Sarga 103

[1–5] As he gazed upon Maithilī, who stood so meekly beside him, Rāma began to speak, as rage simmered in his heart: “So here you are, my good woman. I have won you back after conquering my enemy in battle. Whatever there was to be done through manly valor, I have now accomplished. I have wiped clean the affront, and so my wrath is appeased. For I have eliminated both the insult and my enemy at the same time. Today my manly valor has been witnessed. Today my efforts have borne fruit. Today, having fulfilled my vow here, I am once more master of myself. You were carried off by that wanton *rākṣasa* when you were left alone, but now, through manly action, I have expunged that affront brought about by fate.

[6–9] “What human purpose can man serve if his spirit is so feeble that he will not wipe clean through his own blazing energy an insult he has received? The leaping of the ocean and the razing of Laṅkā—today those praiseworthy deeds of Hanumān have borne fruit. Today, through their valor in battle and their beneficial counsel to me, the efforts of Sugrīva and his army have borne fruit as well. And the efforts of my devoted Vibhīṣaṇa, who abandoned his evil brother and came to me of his own accord, have likewise borne fruit.”

[10–16] As Rāma was saying these words in that fashion, Sītā, wide-eyed like a doe, was overcome with tears. But as Rāma gazed upon her, his anger flared up once more, like the raging flame of a blazing fire drenched with melted butter. Knitting his brows on his forehead and glancing at her from the corner of his eye, he spoke harshly to Sītā there in the midst of the monkeys and *rākṣasas*: “In wiping away this affront, Sītā, I have accomplished all that a man could do. In my wrath, I have won you back from the hands of my enemy, just as, through his austerities, the contemplative sage Agastya won back the southern lands that had been

inaccessible to all living beings. Bless you, but let it be understood that it was not on your account that I undertook the effort of this war, now brought to completion through the valor of my allies. Instead, I did all this in order to protect my reputation and in every way to wipe clean the insult and disgrace to my illustrious lineage.

[17–21] "Since, however, your virtue is now in doubt, your presence has become as profoundly disagreeable to me as is a bright lamp to a man afflicted with a disease of the eye. Go, therefore, as you please, daughter of Janaka. You have my permission. Here are the ten directions. I have no further use for you, my good woman. For what powerful man born in a respectable family—his heart tinged with affection—would take back a woman who had lived in the house of another man? How could I who boast of my noble lineage possibly take you back—just risen from Rāvaṇa's lap and gazed upon by his lustful eye? I have recovered my reputation, and that is the purpose for which I won you back. I do not love you anymore. Go hence wherever you like.

[22–25] "I have made up my mind in saying this, my good woman. Turn your thoughts toward Lakṣmaṇa or Bharata as you please. Or, Sītā, set your mind on Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys, or on the *rākṣasa* lord Vibhīṣaṇa, or on whomever you please. For surely, Sītā, once Rāvaṇa had seen you, so enchanting with your heavenly beauty, he would not long have left you unmolested while you were dwelling in his house." When Maithilī, who deserved to hear only kind words, had heard those cruel words of her beloved after such a long time, she shed tears and trembled violently, like a *vallarī* creeper struck down by the trunk of an elephant lord.

Sarga 104

[1–4] When Vaidehī was addressed in this cruel and horrifying manner by the furious Rāghava, she was deeply wounded. Hearing those cutting words of her husband—words such as she had never heard before—in the presence of that great multitude, Maithilī was overcome with shame. Pierced, as it were, by those verbal barbs, the daughter of Janaka seemed to shrink within herself and gave way to bitter tears. Wiping her tear-stained face, she replied softly to her husband in a faltering voice:

[5–10] "How can you, heroic prince, speak to me with such cutting and improper words, painful to the ears, as some vulgar man might speak to his

vulgar wife? I am not as you think of me, great-armed prince. You must believe in me, for I swear to you by my own virtue. You harbor suspicion against all women because of the conduct of the vulgar ones. If you really knew me, you would abandon your suspicion. If I came into contact with another's body against my will, lord, I had no choice in this matter. It is fate that was to blame here. My heart, which I do control, was always devoted to you. But I could not control my body, which was in the power of another. What could I have done? If, bestower of honor, you do not truly know me despite our long-nurtured love and intimacy, then surely I am lost forever.

[11–16] "When you dispatched the hero Hanumān to search for me, why, heroic prince, did you not repudiate me then, while I was still being held in Laṅkā? No sooner had I heard your words to that effect, heroic prince, than, abandoned by you, I would have abandoned my own life right before the eyes of that monkey lord. Then you would not have had to risk your life in a useless effort, nor would your allies have had to suffer hardship to no purpose. But now, tiger among men, you have given way to anger like some lesser man, taking into account only that I am a woman. Since my name is derived from Janaka, you failed to take into account the fact that I was born from the earth itself, nor, though you are an expert judge of conduct, have you given due consideration to my virtuous conduct. Moreover, you do not weigh the fact that, as a boy, you firmly clasped my hand while I was but a child. My devotion, my virtuous conduct—you have turned your back on all of that."

[17–21] As she was speaking in this fashion, Sītā turned, weeping, to Lakṣmaṇa, who stood there, despondent and brooding. Then she spoke, her voice choked with tears: "Build me a pyre, Saumitri, the only remedy for this calamity. I cannot bear to live tainted by these false allegations. Rejected in this public gathering by my husband, who is not satisfied with my virtues, I shall enter the fire, bearer of oblations, so that I may follow the only path proper for me." When Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes, had been addressed in this fashion by Vaidehī, he was overcome with anger and closely studied Rāghava's face. But sensing Rāma's intentions, which were betrayed by his facial expression, mighty Saumitri, obedient to Rāma's wishes, built the pyre.

[22–27] Then Vaidehī slowly and reverently circumambulated Rāma, whose face was downcast, and approached the blazing fire, eater of

oblations. After making her obeisance to the gods and the brahmans, Maithilī cupped her hands in reverence and, in the presence of Agni, said this: “Since my heart has never once strayed from Rāghava, so may Agni, the purifier, witness of all the world, protect me in every way.” When she had spoken in this fashion, Vaidehī reverently circumambulated the fire, eater of oblations. Then, with complete detachment, she entered the blazing flames. The vast crowd assembled there, filled with children and the aged, watched as Maithilī entered the fire, eater of oblations. As Sītā entered the fire, a deafening and prodigious cry of “Alas! Alas!” arose from the *rākṣasas* and monkeys.

Sarga 105

[1–4] Then King Kubera Vaiśravaṇa; Yama, tormentor of his foes; great Indra of the thousand eyes; Varuṇa, scorcher of his foes; the great god, majestic Śiva, with his half-six eyes and the bull on his banner; and Brahmā, foremost of those who know the *vedas*, the creator of the entire universe—all these assembled in their flying chariots as radiant as the sun, and, coming to the city of Laṅkā, they approached Rāghava. Then, raising their broad arms covered with bracelets, the foremost of the thirty gods addressed Rāghava, who stood before them, his hands cupped in reverence:

[5–8] “How can you, the creator of the entire universe, the most ancient one, and foremost among those possessing supreme knowledge, stand by and watch as Sītā falls into the fire, eater of oblations? How can you not realize that you are the foremost among the hosts of the gods? Long ago, you were the Vasu Ṛtadhāman, the progenitor of the Vasus. You are the primal creator of the three worlds, the untrammeled lord. You are Rudra, the eighth among the Rudras, and you are fifth among the *sādhyas*. The twin Aśvins are your ears, the moon and the sun your eyes. You are present before the beginning and after the end of the worlds, scorcher of your foes. And yet, like some ordinary man, you ignore Vaidehī.”

[9–10] When Rāma Rāghava, the lord of the world, was addressed in this fashion by those guardians of the world, that foremost of those who uphold righteousness said to the foremost of the thirty gods: “I think of myself only as a man, Rāma, the son of Daśaratha. May the Blessed Lord please tell me who I really am, to whom I belong, and why I am here.”

[11–16] As Kākutstha was speaking in this fashion, Brahmā, foremost among those who know the *vedas*, said to him: "Truly valorous Rāma, now hear the truth from me. You are a god, the majestic Lord Nārāyaṇa, wielder of the discus. You are the single-tusked boar and the conqueror of your enemies, past and future. You are the imperishable Brahman, existent in the beginning, the middle, and the end. You are the highest governing principle of all the worlds, the four-armed Viṣvaksena. You are the wielder of the horn bow, you are Hṛṣīkeśa, the primal being, the Supreme Spirit. You are Viṣṇu, the invincible wielder of the sword, and you are Kṛṣṇa of immense strength. You are the leader of the hosts. You are the leader of all beings. You are intelligence, strength, forbearance, and self-control. You are the origin and the dissolution. You are Upendra, Indra's younger brother, and Madhusūdana, slayer of the *asura* Madhu. You are the author of Indra's deeds. You are the lord of the great gods. You are the lotus-naveled god. You are the destroyer of your enemies in battle. The divine great seers call you fit for refuge and refuge itself.

[17–23] "You are the great bull of a thousand horns and a hundred tongues that is the *veda* itself. You are the sacrifice, the sacred utterance *vaṣaṭ*, and the sacred syllable *oṃ*, scorcher of your foes. No one knows your origin or your end. People wonder, 'Who are you?' You are manifest in all creatures—especially brahmans and cows—and also in all the directions, the sky, the mountains, and the forests. You are the majestic lord of a thousand feet, a thousand heads, and a thousand eyes. You support all beings as well as the earth with all its mountains. At the end of the world, you manifest yourself resting on the great serpent on the waters. You support the three worlds, Rāma, along with the gods, *gandharvas*, and *dānavas*. I am your heart, Rāma, your tongue is the goddess of speech, Sarasvatī. It is I, Brahmā, O lord, who made the gods, who are the hairs on your limbs. When you close your eyes, it is night; when you open them, it is day. Your ritual practices are the ordinances of the *vedas*. Without you, there is nothing. Your body is this world; your steadfastness, the earth. Agni is your wrath; Soma, your gentleness, O bearer of the Śrīvatsa mark.

[24–28] "In ancient times, you spanned the three worlds with as many strides. After confining the great *asura* Bali, you made great Indra king. Sītā is Lakṣmī; you are the god Viṣṇu. You are Kṛṣṇa. You are Prajāpati, the lord of creatures. It was in order to slay Rāvaṇa that you entered a human

body here. Thus have you accomplished our purpose, foremost of upholders of righteousness. Rāvaṇa has been slain. Now, Rāma, in your delight, please return to heaven. Your strength and might have not been in vain, nor has your valor. Nor will men who are devoted to you ever fail of their purpose. You are the ancient god and Supreme Spirit. Those who are firmly devoted to you and those men who praise you will never fail in any way."

Sarga 106

[1–3] Upon hearing that auspicious speech uttered by Grandfather Brahmā, Agni, the shining god of fire, arose, holding Vaidehī at his side. Adorned with ornaments of burnished gold and clad in a red garment, the young woman was as radiant as the rising sun. Her hair was dark and curling and her garland and ornaments were unsinged. Her mind was calm and she looked unchanged. Holding Vaidehī at his side, Agni, the shining god of fire, gave her back to Rāma.

[4–9] Then Agni, the purifier and witness of all the world, spoke to Rāma, saying: "Here is your Vaidehī, Rāma. She has committed no sin. She is of pure conduct and high moral character and has never betrayed you by word, thought, imagination, or glance. When you left her alone, she was carried off—helpless and sorrowful—from the deserted forest by the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa, arrogant in his power. Hidden and imprisoned in the inner apartments, thinking only of you and having you for her only recourse, she was guarded by hordes of hideous *rākṣasa* women, dreadful to behold. Although she was enticed and threatened in various ways, Maithilī would not even think of the *rākṣasa*, since her heart was utterly devoted to you. You must take her back, Rāghava, for her heart is pure and she is free from sin. I am giving you an order; there is nothing further to be said."

[10–14] When Rāma, of immense blazing energy, steadfast and firm in his valor, had been addressed in this fashion, that foremost of those who maintain righteousness replied to that most eminent among the thirty gods: "Unquestionably Sītā needed to be proven innocent before the three worlds, since this auspicious woman had long dwelt in Rāvaṇa's inner apartments. For surely had I not put Jānakī to the test, the virtuous would have said of me, 'Daśaratha's son Rāma is a lustful fool.' I know full well that Janaka's daughter Maithilī could give her heart to no other, since she is devoted to me and obeys my every thought. But in order that the three worlds too

should have faith in her, I, whose ultimate recourse is truth, simply stood by as Vaidehī entered the fire, eater of oblations.

[15–20] "Rāvaṇa could no more have violated that wide-eyed lady, protected by her own blazing energy, than could the mighty ocean violate its shore. That evil-minded wretch was incapable of assaulting Maithilī, even in his thoughts. For she is as unapproachable as a blazing flame of fire. This auspicious woman could never have ruled over Rāvaṇa's inner apartments. For she is as inseparable from me as is its radiance from the sun, bringer of light. Janaka's daughter Maithilī has been proven innocent before the three worlds, and I am no more able to give her up than is a self-controlled man, his good name. Moreover, I must follow the good advice that all of you affectionate friends, respected throughout the worlds, have uttered in this fashion for my own good." When he had uttered these words, mighty Rāma, praised by his mighty companions for the feat he had accomplished, was reunited with his beloved. Then Rāghava experienced the happiness he so richly deserved.

Sarga 107

[1–8] Upon hearing that auspicious speech so beautifully spoken by Rāghava, Maheśvara responded with these still more auspicious words: "Lotus-eyed, great-armed, broad-chested scorcher of your foes! Foremost of weapon bearers! Thank heavens you have accomplished this feat. Thank heavens, Rāma, you have dispelled in battle the vast and terrible darkness in the form of the fear of Rāvaṇa that had engulfed the entire world. You must now console despondent Bharata and the illustrious Kausalyā and see Kaikeyī and Lakṣmaṇa's mother, Sumitrā. You must assume the kingship of Ayodhyā and reward all your allies. Then, mighty hero, you must establish a lineage in the House of Ikṣvāku. At last, once you have offered the *aśvamedha* and attained unsurpassed glory, you should give away your wealth to the brahmans and ascend to the triple heaven. And here, Kākutstha, in his flying chariot, is your father, King Daśaratha, who, in the world of men, was your illustrious elder. Saved by you, his son, the majestic king has attained the world of Indra. Together with Lakṣmaṇa, you must now respectfully salute him."

[9–12] Upon hearing these words of the great god Śiva, Kākutstha, together with Lakṣmaṇa, made obeisance to his father, who stood atop his

flying chariot. Then the Lord, together with his brother Lakṣmaṇa, gazed upon his father, who was clad in a spotless garment and was blazing with his own innate splendor. Filled with the greatest joy, the lord of the earth, Daśaratha, mounted on his flying chariot, gazed upon his son, who was dearer to him than life itself. Then, seated on a splendid throne, the great-armed lord took him on his lap and, taking him in his arms, said these words:

[13–17] "I swear to you truthfully, Rāma, that without you I care nothing for heaven and the esteem of the divine seers. And, most eloquent of men, those words that Kaikeyī uttered regarding your banishment were still rankling in my heart. But today, seeing that you are safe and sound and having embraced you and Lakṣmaṇa, I have been freed from my sorrow, like the sun, bringer of light, emerging from a dense fog. My son, you, an excellent son and a great man, have saved me, just as a righteous brahman was saved by Aṣṭāvakra. I now realize, my gentle son, that you are the Supreme Spirit, who was enjoined by the lords of the gods to slay Rāvaṇa.

[18–23] "Surely, Rāma, Kausalyā will have achieved her most cherished desire when, in delight, she sees that you, slayer of your enemies, have returned home from the wilderness. And just as surely, Rāma, will the people have achieved their most cherished desire when they see that you have returned to the city and, dripping with water, have been consecrated as lord of the earth, bearer of wealth. I only wish that I could see you reunited with devoted, powerful, honest, and righteous Bharata. My gentle son, you have spent fourteen years in the wilderness living with Sītā and wise Lakṣmaṇa. You have completed your sojourn in the forest and have thus fulfilled your vow. Moreover, having slain Rāvaṇa in battle, you have gratified the gods. You have performed a praiseworthy feat and gained renown, slayer of your foes. Now, established in the kingship, may you attain long life, together with your brothers."

[24–26] As the king was speaking in this fashion, Rāma, cupping his hands in reverence, said this to him: "O you who understand righteousness, please extend your grace to Kaikeyī and Bharata. And may that terrible curse that you invoked when you told Kaikeyī, 'I renounce both you and your son,' not be visited upon Kaikeyī and her son, lord." The great king said, "So be it," to Rāma, who stood there with his hands cupped in

reverence. Then, embracing Lakṣmaṇa, he now spoke to him in these words:

[27–32] “In devotedly serving Rāma as well as Sītā Vaidehī, you have given me the greatest pleasure and attained the fruit of your righteousness. And since Rāma is pleased with you, O you who know righteousness, you will attain righteousness, great renown on earth, heaven, and everlasting glory. Bless you, increaser of Sumitrā’s joy, you must serve Rāma. For Rāma is perpetually devoted to the welfare of all the world. All these gods, including Indra, along with the three worlds, the perfected beings, and the supreme seers, have approached him, the great Supreme Spirit, and are worshiping him. Rāma, scorcher of his foes, has been revealed by them, my gentle son, to be Brahman, the unmanifest and imperishable Supreme Spirit, the secret heart of the gods. Devotedly serving Rāma as well as Sītā Vaidehī, you have attained righteousness and immense glory.”

[33–36] When he had spoken in this fashion to Lakṣmaṇa, who stood with his hands cupped in reverence, the righteous and great-armed king then said these splendid words to Vaidehī: “You should not be angry over this repudiation, Vaidehī. Wishing only what is best for you, Rāma did this to demonstrate your purity. Fair-browed woman, you do not need to be instructed with regard to your obedience to your husband. Nonetheless, it is necessary for me to tell you that he is your highest divinity.” When radiant Daśaratha had instructed his two sons and his daughter-in-law Sītā in this fashion, he proceeded in his flying chariot to Indra’s world.

Sarga 108

[1–2] When Daśaratha Kākutstha had departed, great Indra, the chastiser of Pāka, spoke in the greatest delight to Rāghava, who stood with his hands cupped in reverence: “Rāma, scorcher of your foes! Your seeing us should not be without its reward. I am pleased, and therefore you must say what your heart desires.”

[3–8] Addressed in this fashion, Kākutstha, together with his brother Lakṣmaṇa and his wife, Sītā, cupped his hands in reverence and replied: “If you are truly pleased with me, lord of all the gods, I will tell you. Please make my words prove true, foremost among the eloquent. May all those valorous monkeys who, for my sake, have gone to the abode of Yama rise up, restored to life. Let them, who were devoted to my service and heedless

of death, be reunited through your grace. This is the boon I choose. Humbler of pride, I wish to see the langurs and apes free from their pain and their wounds and filled once more with strength and vigor. May there always be choice roots and fruits, even out of season, and may the rivers run clear wherever those monkeys may dwell."

[9–13] When great Indra had heard those words of great Rāghava, he responded with these words, which manifested his pleasure: "This is a major boon that you have requested, my son, delight of the Raghus. But these tawny monkeys shall arise, just like sleepers when their sleep is done. Filled with the greatest joy, they will all be reunited with their friends, their relatives, their kinsmen, and their own people. The trees shall be filled with fruits and varicolored with blossoms, even out of season, great bowman, and the rivers shall be filled with water." Then all the monkeys—their bodies, which had been covered with wounds, now healed and free of wounds—were wonderstruck, crying, "What is this?"

[14–19] When all the principal gods saw that Kākutstha had had his wish fulfilled, they first praised him, who was so praiseworthy and who was accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, and then they said: "Proceed from here to Ayodhyā, hero, and discharge the monkeys. You should also console your devoted and long-suffering Maithilī. You must see your brother Bharata, who is practicing austerities in his grief for you. Then, once you have gone there, have yourself consecrated, and so bring joy to the people of the city." When they had spoken in this fashion, the gods took their leave of Rāma and Saumitri, and, in great delight, they went off to heaven in their flying chariots, which were as radiant as the sun. Then Kākutstha, along with his brother Lakṣmaṇa, after respectfully saluting all of the most eminent of the thirty gods, ordered the army to make camp. Under the protection of Lakṣmaṇa and Rāma, that great and glorious army, radiant with splendor, its troops delighted, glowed on every side, as does the night illumined by the cool-rayed moon.

Sarga 109

[1–3] When Rāma, tamer of his enemies, had passed the night and arisen at his leisure, Vibhīṣaṇa, cupping his hands in reverence and wishing him victory, said to him: "Here is water for your bath, ointments for your body, garments and ornaments, heavenly sandalwood paste, and various kinds of

garlands. These lotus-eyed women, skilled in the arts of grooming their like, are at your service. They will bathe you in the proper fashion, Rāghava."

[4–7] Addressed in this fashion, Kākutstha replied to Vibhīṣaṇa, "You should instead invite the tawny monkeys, led by Sugrīva, to bathe. For the great-armed and righteous prince Bharata, Kaikeyī's son, who is delicate and accustomed to comforts, is nonetheless true to his vows and suffering hardship for my sake. Without him—so righteous in his conduct—I do not care for baths, garments, and ornaments. Moreover, we must return to the city immediately by this very road, for the path of one traveling to Ayodhyā is extremely difficult."

[8–14] Addressed in this fashion, Vibhīṣaṇa replied to Kākutstha: "I shall see to it that you reach your city in a single day, prince. For, bless you, there is a flying palace, as radiant as the sun, called Puṣpaka, which Rāvaṇa took from my brother Kubera by force. That flying palace, which resembles a cloud, is kept nearby. By means of this conveyance you shall go to Ayodhyā free from anxiety. But if I am at all worthy of your favor, if you are cognizant of my virtues, and if you have any affection for me, my wise friend, then please stay here for a while. Then, Rāma, honored with all manner of desirable things, you can depart with your brother Lakṣmaṇa and your wife, Vaidehī. You are very dear to me, Rāma, as is your army and your host of friends. Therefore, please accept this appropriate hospitality that I am offering. But I am not trying to give you orders, Rāghava. I am your servant, and I am beseeching you out of my affection, esteem, and friendship."

[15–21] Addressed in this fashion, Rāma replied to Vibhīṣaṇa in such a way that all the *rākṣasas* and monkeys could hear him: "I have been greatly honored by you, heroic scorcher of your foes, through your counsel, your wholehearted assistance, and your unparalleled friendship. It is not that I would not heed your words, lord of the *rākṣasas*. But my heart is eager to see my brother Bharata. For he came out to Citrakūṭa to bring me back, and, though he beseeched me, bowing his head to my feet, I would not heed his words. And my heart is eager also to see Kausalyā, Sumitrā, and illustrious Kaikeyī, as well as my elders, my friends, and the citizens, together with their children. So please get that flying palace ready for me immediately, lord of the *rākṣasas*. For how indeed could I agree to stay here, now that my

mission has been accomplished? Please grant me leave, Vibhīṣaṇa, my gentle friend. I have already been deeply honored. Please don't be angry, but since I am in haste, I beseech you."

[22–27] Vibhīṣaṇa then stood waiting after announcing to Rāma that that unassailable flying palace, as swift as thought, had arrived. Each of its parts was variegated with gold, and its raised platforms were made of lapis. It was covered on every side with penthouses, and it shone like silver. It was adorned with white pennants and banners. It was splendid with golden mansions and adorned with golden lotuses. It was covered with masses of tiny bells and had windows of pearl. It was covered with masses of bells on every side so that it made a sweet sound. Fashioned by Viśvakarman, it resembled the peak of Mount Meru. It was adorned with many mansions that shone with pearl and silver. It had floors whose sections were variegated with crystal, and its splendid and costly seats of lapis were spread with expensive coverlets.

Sarga 110

[1–2] When Vibhīṣaṇa saw that the flying palace Puṣpaka, all adorned with flowers, had come, he spoke to Rāma, who stood nearby. Cupping his hands in reverence, the humble and obedient lord of the *rākṣasas*, filled with a sense of urgency, said to Rāghava, "What should I do now?"

[3–7] After some reflection, Rāghava of immense blazing energy said these affectionate words to him in such a way that Lakṣmaṇa could hear them: "Vibhīṣaṇa, the forest-dwelling monkeys have performed arduous deeds. You must honor them with gems, various ornaments, and other valuables. O lord of the *rākṣasas*, Laṅkā was besieged and conquered with the assistance of these monkeys, who, filled with the excitement of battle, cast off their fear of death and never retreated in battle. Honored in this fashion by you, bestower of honor, in your gratitude, these leaders of the troops of tawny monkeys, who are deserving of honor, will be delighted. I am advising you to do this so that they may recognize that you know both how to acquire wealth and dispense it and that you are compassionate and illustrious."

[8–10] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, Vibhīṣaṇa honored all the monkeys, each according to his share, with gems and other valuables. Then, having seen the troop leaders honored with gems and other valuables,

Rāma, taking the illustrious, but embarrassed, Vaidehī on his lap, ascended that magnificent flying palace, together with his valorous brother Lakṣmaṇa, who was armed with a bow.

[11–15] Once he had ascended the flying palace, Kākutstha addressed the immensely powerful Sugrīva, the *rākṣasa* Vibhīṣaṇa, and all the monkeys: "Foremost among the monkeys, you have done all that friends could be expected to do. I grant you leave. You may now all depart at your leisure. [bb]And you, Sugrīva, scorcher of your foes, you who fear only unrighteousness, have accomplished all that a friend and ally could be expected to do. You may now quickly return to Kiṣkindhā accompanied by your army. And you, Vibhīṣaṇa, may dwell in Lañkā, your own kingdom, which I have given you. Not even the denizens of heaven along with Indra will be capable of assaulting you. I will now return to Ayodhyā, my father's capital. I wish to take my leave, and I bid you all farewell."

[16–20] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, the immensely powerful monkeys and the *rākṣasa* Vibhīṣaṇa cupped their hands in reverence and said to him, "We wish to go to Ayodhyā. Please, sir, take us all. Once we have seen you dripping from your consecration and have respectfully saluted Kausalyā, we will immediately return to our own homes, O son of the lord of men." Addressed in this fashion by Vibhīṣaṇa and the monkeys, righteous and majestic Rāghava replied to them and to Sugrīva: "All my friends and I would experience a pleasure greater than any other if I could share the joy of returning to the city together with all of you. So quickly ascend the flying palace, Sugrīva, together with your monkeys. And you too, Vibhīṣaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, ascend along with your ministers."

[21–23] Then, hastening, Sugrīva, together with his army, quickly ascended the heavenly flying palace Puṣpaka, as did Vibhīṣaṇa, together with his ministers. Once they had all ascended the superb vehicle of Kubera, lord of wealth, it rose into the sky at Rāghava's command. Then Rāma departed in that radiant flying palace yoked to *haṃsas*. Delighted in mind and body, he resembled Kubera himself.

Sarga 111

[1–2] At Rāma's command that magnificent flying palace flew onward, like a great cloud driven before the wind. Casting his gaze in all directions,

Rāma, the delight of the Raghus, said to Sītā Maithilī, whose face was like the hare-marked moon:

[3–7] “Vaidehī, behold Laṅkā, fashioned by Viśvakarman himself, situated there on the peak of Mount Trikūṭa, which resembles the peak of Mount Kailāsa. And look, Sītā, there, mired with flesh and blood, is the battlefield that was the scene of that huge slaughter of the tawny monkeys and the *rākṣasas*. It was here, on your account, wide-eyed lady, that I slew Rāvaṇa. Here too, Kumbhakarṇa was slain as well as the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Prahasta. And it was here that Lakṣmaṇa slew Indrajit Rāvaṇi in battle, while Virūpākṣa, impossible to even look upon, as well as Mahāpārśva and Mahodara were also slain. Akampana was slain here as were those other powerful *rākṣasas*, Triśiras, Atikāya, Devāntaka, and Narāntaka.

[8–13] “And here Rāvaṇa’s wife Mandodarī, surrounded by a thousand of her co-wives all drenched with tears, mourned him. And there you can see the shore of the ocean, fair-faced woman, where we camped for the night after crossing the sea. And, wide-eyed lady, that bridge is Nala’s bridge, all but impossible to build, which, for your sake, I had constructed across the ocean, the reservoir of waters. Observe the imperturbable ocean, Vaidehī, Varuṇa’s abode, boundless and roaring, abounding in conch and mother-of-pearl. And look, Maithilī, at the golden lord of mountains, Mount Maināka, with its golden peak, which, parting the sea, rose up to provide a resting place for Hanumān. And here is where Vibhīṣaṇa, king of the *rākṣasas*, came over to me.

[14–20] “And there, Sītā, one can see Sugrīva’s charming city, Kiṣkindhā, with its lovely woodlands. That is where I killed Vālin. There, Sītā, one can see Ṛśyamūka, foremost of mountains. Laced with golden minerals, it resembles a huge storm cloud laced with lightning. It was here that I met Sugrīva, lord of the monkeys, and where I forged a pact, Sītā, with the purpose of slaying Vālin. And there one can see the lotus pond Pampā, with its lovely woodlands, where, bereft of you, I lamented in my profound grief. On its banks I met Śabarī, who practiced righteousness. And it was here that I killed Kabandha, his arms a league in length. And there, graceful Sītā, in Janasthāna, one can see that majestic tree, the lord of the forest, where, on your account, a great battle took place between cruel Rāvaṇa and great Jaṭāyus. And it was here too that, with my straight-flying

arrows, I slew Khara and struck down Dūṣaṇa and immensely powerful Triśiras in battle.

[21–29] "There one can see the charming and beautiful leaf hut from which you were forcibly abducted by Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*. And there is the lovely and auspicious Godāvarī River with its limpid waters. Look, Maithilī, one can see the ashram of Agastya. And, Vaidehī, here one can see the vast ashram of Śarabhaṅga to which thousand-eyed Śakra, smasher of citadels, himself came. Over there, slender-waisted woman, one can see the dwellings of the ascetics, where Atri, the ashram elder, whose radiance is like that of Sūrya or Agni Vaiśvānara, dwells. It was here, Sītā, that you met the ascetic woman who practiced righteousness. It was in this region that I killed the giant Virādha. And here, slender woman, just coming into view, is Citrakūṭa, the lord of mountains, where Kaikeyī's son came to beseech me to return. Over there, in the distance, where Bharadvāja's majestic ashram is just coming into view, one can see the Yamunā with its lovely woodlands. And over there one can see the Ganges, which flows by three paths, lady of the fair complexion. And that is the city of Śṛṅgavera, where Guha met us. And there one can see Ayodhyā, my father's capital. Now that you have returned, Vaidehī, you should make obeisance to Ayodhyā."

[30–31] Then all the monkeys and the *rākṣasa* Vibhīṣaṇa, jumping up again and again, gazed at that beautiful city. Those leaping monkeys gazed upon the city of Ayodhyā, garlanded with white mansions. It had spacious courtyards and was crowded with elephants and horses, just like Amarāvatī, the city of great Indra.

Sarga 112

[1–2] And so, on the fifth day of the fortnight when the fourteenth year was just complete, Lakṣmaṇa's older brother reached Bharadvāja's ashram and, with complete self-possession, praised that sage. When he had respectfully saluted that treasure trove of asceticism Bharadvāja, he inquired of him: "I trust, holy sage, that you hear that the people of the city are healthy and well fed. I trust that Bharata is intent on his duties and that my mothers are still living."

[3–8] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, the great sage Bharadvāja smiled and, in great delight, replied to that foremost of the Raghus:

“Smeared with mud and wearing matted locks, Bharata awaits you, having placed your sandals in a position of honor. And, yes, everything is fine in your household. When last I saw you, conqueror in battle, you were entering the deep forest on foot, clad in barkcloth garments, with but one lone companion and a woman. Desiring only righteousness, you had been driven from the kingdom, giving up everything to obey your father’s instructions and intent on obeying those of Kaikeyī. Stripped of all objects of enjoyment and subsisting on wild roots and fruits, you were like an immortal god fallen from heaven. At that time, I was deeply saddened. But now, when I see that you have accomplished your mission and triumphed over your enemy in the company of your kinsmen and your hosts of friends, I feel unsurpassed delight.

[9–15] “And I know, Rāghava, about all the many joys and sorrows you experienced, starting with the slaughter in Janasthāna. There was the encounter with Mārīca and the assault on Sītā while you were employed on behalf of the brahmans to protect all the ascetics. Then there was the encounter with Kabandha, your arrival at Lake Pampā, and your alliance with Sugrīva on account of which you slew Vālin. I know about the search for Vaidehī, the feats of the son of the wind god, and how Nala’s bridge was built once Vaidehī had been found. I know too about how the excited troop leaders of the tawny monkeys set Lañkā ablaze, and how Rāvaṇa, that thorn in the side of the gods, was destroyed, along with his sons, his kinsmen, his ministers, his army, and his vehicles. Finally, I know about your meeting with the thirty gods and how they granted you a boon. All of that is known to me, lover of righteousness, through the power of my asceticism. And I too will grant you a boon, foremost of those who bear weapons. So please accept my guest-offering. Tomorrow you shall go to Ayodhyā.”

[16–18] The majestic son of the king, bowing his head, accepted his instructions with the words, “Very well.” Then, in great delight, he requested his boon: “Holy sage, may all the trees along the road I take to Ayodhyā bear fruit out of season and drip with honey.” Then, suddenly, those trees that had no fruit were filled with fruit, those that had no blossoms were covered with them. Those that were bare were covered with leaves, and all of them dripped with honey.

Sarga 113

[1–6] But once Rāghava had caught sight of Ayodhyā, he was plunged into thought. Then, after some reflection, he cast his glance upon the monkeys. Then wise Rāma of blazing energy, wishing to do a kindness, spoke kindly to the leaping monkey, swift-striding Hanumān: “Go quickly, best of leaping monkeys. Hastening to Ayodhyā, you must find out if all is well with the people in the king’s palace. When you reach the city of Śṛṅgavera, you must inform the chief of the Niṣādas, Guha, whose realm is the deep forest, in my words, that I am safe. For once my friend and equal Guha hears that I am safe, well, and free from anxiety, he will be delighted. And Guha, chief of the Niṣādas, in great delight, will show you the way to Ayodhyā and will inform you of Bharata’s activities.

[7–11] “You are to inform Bharata in my words that I am safe. Tell him that, together with my wife and Lakṣmaṇa, I have accomplished my purpose. Tell him about Vaidehī’s abduction by powerful Rāvaṇa, my negotiations with Sugrīva, the slaying of Vālin in battle, the search for Maithilī, and how you found her after leaping across the great water, the imperishable lord of rivers. And tell him about the march to the sea and the encounter with Sāgara, god of the ocean, and how the bridge was built and Rāvaṇa slain. Tell him about the granting of the boon by great Indra, Brahmā, and Varuṇa, and about my reunion with our father through the grace of the great god Śiva. And tell him: ‘Having conquered the hosts of his enemies, attained unsurpassed glory, and accomplished his purpose, immensely powerful Rāma has returned with his allies.’

[13–17] “And whatever facial expression Bharata may adopt upon hearing this, you must report that to me fully. Through the color of his face, his glance, and his manner of speaking, you should accurately determine everything about Bharata’s state of mind and his intentions. For whose head would not be turned by an ancestral kingdom rich in every object of desire and filled with elephants, horses, and chariots? And should majestic Bharata, being long accustomed to it, desire the kingship for himself, then let that delight of the Raghus rule the entire earth without exception. Once you have determined his state of mind and his intentions, monkey, you must return quickly before we have gone very far.”

[18–22] Instructed in this fashion, Hanumān, son of Māruta, took on a human form and hastened to Ayodhyā. Leaping along the path of his father and crossing the fearsome confluence of the Ganges and the Yamunā

Rivers, the auspicious abode of the serpent lords, powerful Hanumān reached the city of Śṛṅgavera, and, approaching Guha, he delightedly addressed him with these auspicious words: "Your truly valorous friend Rāma Kākutstha, who is accompanied by Sītā and Saumitri, informs you that he is safe. On the instructions of Bharadvāja, Rāghava spent last night, the night of the fifth, with him. Now, since he has taken his leave of the sage, you shall see him this very day."

[23–25] When he had spoken in this fashion, swift Hanumān of immense blazing energy, without further hesitation, swiftly flew up once more, the hairs of his body bristling with excitement. He saw the spot sacred to Rāma and the river Vālukinī. And he saw the Gomatī River and a fearsome forest of *sāla* trees. When he had swiftly traveled a long way, that elephant among monkeys reached the blossoming trees that grew near Nandigrāma.

[26–31] A quarter of a league from Ayodhyā he spied Bharata, who was living in an ashram. Dejected and emaciated, he was clad in garments of barkcloth and black antelope skin. Wearing matted locks, his body was smeared with dirt. Tormented by the catastrophe that had befallen his brother and practicing righteousness, he engaged in asceticism, restrained and subsisting on fruits and roots. He had a mass of matted hair piled high and was clad in barkcloth and animal skins. Self-controlled and with focused mind, he was equal in blazing energy to a brahman-seer. Having placed Rāma's sandals in a position of honor, he ruled the earth, protecting the people of all four social classes from every danger. He was attended by incorruptible ministers, *purohitas*, and attentive army chiefs, all clad in ochre garments. For the citizens, who loved righteousness, were determined never to abandon the prince, who was clad in barkcloth and black antelope skin.

[32–36] Cupping his hands in reverence, Hanumān, son of Māruta, spoke these words to that knower of righteousness, who was like a second Dharma, god of righteousness, incarnate: "Kākutstha, for whom you have been grieving and who had been living in the Daṇḍaka forest wearing barkcloth garments and matted hair, informs you that he is safe. I bring you wonderful news, your majesty! Reunited with your brother Rāma within the very hour, you shall put aside your terrible sorrow. Having slain Rāvaṇa and recovered Maithilī, Rāma, who has accomplished his purpose, has come back with his immensely powerful allies. And so have Lakṣmaṇa of

immense blazing energy and illustrious Sītā Vaidehī, who is united with Rāma, just as is Śacī with great Indra."

[37–43] Addressed in this fashion by Hanumān, Bharata, Kaikeyī's son, in a sudden access of delight, fell and fainted dead away in his joy. Regaining consciousness and getting up after a short while, Bharata Rāghava then said this to Hanumān, who had told him the good news. Embracing the monkey in his excitement, majestic Bharata drenched him with copious teardrops of joy and delight, saying: "Whether you be a god or a man, you have come here out of compassion. My gentle friend, I shall give you, the bearer of this good news who reported it to me, a hundred thousand cows, a hundred prosperous villages, and sixteen maidens of excellent character, adorned with earrings, to be your wives. These are women of excellent caste and family, adorned with every ornament. Their complexions are like gold, their faces as lovely as the moon, and their noses and thighs perfect." When the king's son had heard from the monkey hero about Rāma's seemingly miraculous return, he was delighted, and in his joy and eagerness to see Rāma, he once more spoke these words.

Sarga 114

[1–3] "I am hearing such delightful news of my lord, who had gone to the deep forest for so many years. So it seems to me that the popular verse, 'Joy comes to a man even if he has to wait a hundred years,' is quite true. How and in what country and for what reason did Rāghava come to be associated with the tawny monkeys? Tell me truthfully, since I am asking you."

[4–9] Questioned in this fashion by the prince, Hanumān, seated on an ascetic's seat, recounted all of Rāma's adventures in the forest: "Great-armed prince, you already know all about how Rāma was exiled, about the two boons given to your mother, and about how King Daśaratha died from grief for his son. And you know how you yourself, lord, were hastily brought back from Rājagṛha by messengers, and how, when you entered Ayodhyā, you declined the kingship. You also know how, when you had gone to Mount Citrakūṭa, your brother, the tormentor of his foes, remained faithful to the king's vow and rejected the kingdom, even though you—following the righteous path of the virtuous—begged him to accept it. And you know, of course, how, taking your noble brother's sandals, you came

back once again. Now learn from me what took place once you had gone back.

[10–14] "Once you had departed, Rāma entered the vast and deserted Daṇḍaka forest, whose beasts and birds were wildly agitated. And as they were making their way through that dense forest, the powerful Virādha appeared before them, roaring a mighty roar. Seizing him, they hurled him, face down with his arms raised, into a pit, as he roared a mighty roar like an elephant. After accomplishing that difficult feat, the brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa came, that very evening, to Śarabhañga's lovely ashram. Once Śarabhañga had gone to heaven, truly valorous Rāma respectfully saluted all the sages and then proceeded to Janasthāna.

[15–20] "While great Rāghava was living there, he slaughtered fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* of fearsome deeds. Then, a little later, Śūrpaṇakhā approached Rāma. Instructed by Rāma, immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa suddenly sprang up, seized his sword, and hacked off her ears and nose. Mutilated by him, that foolish creature then approached Rāvaṇa. Next, a fearsome *rākṣasa*, a servant of Rāvaṇa named Mārīca, turned himself into a bejeweled deer and infatuated Vaidehī. When she caught sight of it, Vaidehī said to Rāma, 'You must catch it! Oh, how charming and beautiful it would be in our ashram!' Then Rāma chased him as he fled and, as he fled, killed him with a straight arrow.

[21–25] "Then, gentle prince, when Rāghava had gone after the deer, and Lakṣmaṇa too had gone out, ten-necked Rāvaṇa entered the ashram. He violently seized Sītā, just as a baleful planet might seize the constellation Rohiṇī in the heavens. Once he had killed the vulture Jaṭāyus, who tried to rescue her, Rāvaṇa seized Sītā violently and swiftly departed. However, some monkeys of extraordinary form, as huge as mountains, who were there on a mountaintop, were astonished to see Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, going by, clutching Sītā. Rāvaṇa, who made the world cry out, then entered Lañkā. There Rāvaṇa installed Maithilī in a vast and beautiful palace covered with gold and tried to calm her with soothing words.

[26–29] "Finding the vulture upon his return, Kākutstha was distraught. [cc]After cremating the slain vulture, a dear friend of his father, Rāma wandered along the Godāvarī River and through its forest regions all in blossom. Then the two princes encountered the *rākṣasa* Kabandha in the vast forest. On the advice of Kabandha, truly valorous Rāma went to Mount

Ṛśyamūka and met with Sugrīva. Even before they had met, the two had formed an emotional bond through their mutual affection. Through their conversations with each other, it became a profound love.

[30–36] “Once he had slain the gigantic and immensely powerful Vālin through the strength of his own arms in battle, Rāma bestowed upon Sugrīva a kingship of his own. Once Sugrīva had been established in the kingship, he promised Rāma that, together with all the monkeys, he would search for the princess. Under orders from Sugrīva, the great lord of the monkeys, a hundred million monkeys were sent out in all directions. And then, while we were lost in the great Vindhya mountain range and were sorely afflicted with sorrow, a great deal of time passed. But the mighty brother of the king of vultures, Saṃpāti by name, informed us about Sītā’s dwelling in the abode of Rāvaṇa. Then, relying on my own strength, I leapt a hundred leagues, dispelling the sorrow of my kinsmen, who were overcome with sorrow. And there I found that woman, all alone, in an *aśoka* grove, clad in a silken garment, covered with dirt, miserable but firm in her vows.

[37–39] “After meeting with that blameless woman and having thoroughly questioned her in the proper fashion, I took a jewel as a token of recognition and, having accomplished my mission, returned. When I returned, I presented that great and glittering gem to Rāma, tireless in action, as a token of recognition. Once he had heard about Maithilī, he was delighted and regained his will to live, as might a gravely ill man at the point of death after drinking the nectar of immortality.

[40–46] “Putting in motion a great undertaking, he turned his thoughts to the destruction of Laṅkā, just as Agni, the shining god of fire, desires to destroy all the worlds at the end of a cosmic era. Then, when he reached the sea, he had Nala construct a bridge. It was by means of that bridge that the army of monkeys crossed over. Nīla slew Prahasta, and Rāghava killed Kumbhakarṇa. Lakṣmaṇa slew Rāvaṇa’s son Indrajit, and Rāma himself killed Rāvaṇa. Then Kākutstha, that scorcher of his foes, having met with Śakra, Yama, and Varuṇa, along with the gods and seers, received boons. And when he had received those boons, he was reunited with the monkeys in great delight. He then proceeded to Kiṣkindhā in the flying palace Puṣpaka. Nothing can prevent you from seeing Rāma tomorrow on the auspicious day of the moon’s conjunction with the constellation Puṣya. For

having once more reached the Ganges, he is staying there with the sage Bharadvāja.” Then, when Bharata had heard that great and truthful speech of Hanumān, he was delighted. Cupping his hands in reverence, he spoke these words that delighted one’s heart, “At long last, indeed, my fondest wish has been fulfilled.”

Sarga 115

[1–3] When truly valorous Bharata, slayer of enemy heroes, had heard those words that filled him with joy, he gave instructions to Śatrughna, who was similarly delighted: “Let pious men worship all the divinities and the shrines of the city with fragrant garlands and musical instruments. And let the king’s wives and his ministers, the soldiers, the army troops and their womenfolk go out to see Rāma’s face, which is like the hare-marked moon.”

[4–8] When powerful Śatrughna, slayer of enemy heroes, had heard those words of Bharata, he commanded his many thousands of conscripted laborers: “Level the road—depressions, rough places, as well as smooth areas—from Nandigrāma onward, sparing only the roadside shrines. Have some men sprinkle the whole ground with ice-cold water, and then have others strew it everywhere with parched grain and flowers. Let them raise flags along the main road in our splendid city, and let them beautify their houses starting at daybreak. Let hundreds of men strew the broad royal highway with garlands, festoons, and loose blossoms and with fragrant powders in five colors.”

[9–12] Given their orders, great chariot-warriors went forth swiftly in their chariots along with thousands of rutting elephants adorned with gold, while others went forth with bull- and cow-elephants with golden girths. Next, all of Daśaratha’s wives went forth mounted in carriages, placing Kausalyā and Sumitrā at their head. The thundering of the horses’ hooves, the rumbling of the chariot wheels, and the din of conches and war drums seemed to shake the very earth. Indeed, the entire city went forth to Nandigrāma.

[13–17] Thus did great and righteous Bharata, together with his counselors, set forth to meet Rāma. He was surrounded by twice-born eminent brahmans, the leaders of the caste guilds, and merchants, as well as by his ministers, who held garlands and sweets in their hands. To the sounds

of conches and *bherī* drums, he was lauded by panegyrists. Deeply learned in righteousness, he bore his noble brother's sandals on his head and carried with him a white umbrella festooned with white garlands, and a pair of white yak-tail fly whisks adorned with gold and fit for a king. He who had been earlier downcast and was still emaciated with fasting and clad in garments of barkcloth and black antelope skin was now filled with joy upon hearing of his brother's return. Looking about him, Bharata said these words to the son of Pavana: "I hope you have not fallen prey to the typical flightiness of monkeys. For I do not see the noble Rāma Kākutstha, the scorcher of his foes."

[18–25] When these words had been spoken, Hanumān said this to truly valorous Bharata, informing him of the reason: "They have reached those trees that, through the grace of Bharadvāja, are always in fruit and flower, dripping honey, and resounding with intoxicated bees. For such, scorcher of your foes, was the boon granted to Rāma by Vāsava. And this was the hospitality, complete with every desirable thing, that was offered to him and his army. One can hear the fearsome racket of the excited forest-dwelling monkeys. I think the monkey army must be crossing the Gomatī River. Look at the cloud of dust that has been kicked up over toward the Vālukinī River. I think that the leaping monkeys must be crashing their way through the lovely forest of *sāla* trees. And there in the distance one can see the bright celestial flying palace Puṣpaka, which looks like the moon and was created by the mind of Brahmā. Through the grace of Kubera, bestower of wealth, great Rāma obtained this celestial flying palace, as swift as thought, after killing Rāvaṇa together with his kinsmen. In it are the two heroic Rāghava brothers, together with Vaidehī as well as Sugrīva of immense blazing energy and Vibhīṣaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*."

[26–29] Then a great clamor of joy arose, reaching to the heavens, as the women, children, youths, and elderly cried out, "There's Rāma!" The men got down from their chariots, elephants, and horses and, standing on the ground, gazed at Rāma, who, in his flying palace, resembled the moon in the sky. Cupping his hands in reverence and facing Rāghava, Bharata joyfully honored Rāma with a fitting welcome. In that flying palace, which Brahmā created with his mind, the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa, with his long and wide eyes, looked as splendid as a second Indra, wielder of the *vajra*.

[30–35] Then Bharata humbly praised his brother Rāma, who stood atop the flying palace, like the sun, bringer of light, on the summit of Mount Meru. Invited on board the flying palace, truly valorous Bharata approached Rāma in great delight and once more respectfully saluted him. Then Kākutstha, raising up Bharata, whom he had not seen in such a long time, placed him on his lap and embraced him in great joy. After warmly greeting Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, scorcher of his foes, respectfully saluted Vaidehī and, in great delight, announced his name. Next, the son of Kaikeyī embraced Sugrīva, Jāmbavān, Aṅgada, Mainda, Dvivida, Nīla, and Ṛṣabha. Those monkeys, who could take on any form at will, took on human forms and, in great delight, inquired of Bharata about his welfare.

[36–41] Then Bharata graciously spoke these words to Vibhīṣaṇa: "Thank heavens that through your assistance this all-but-impossible feat has been accomplished!" Next, Śatrughna respectfully saluted Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and, afterward, humbly worshiped Sītā's feet. Then Rāma approached his mother, who was so disconsolate and drawn with grieving, and, bending, he clasped her feet, soothing her heart. Then, after respectfully saluting Sumitrā and illustrious Kaikeyī, he approached all his other mothers and the *purohita*. And then all the people of the city addressed him, their hands cupped in reverence, crying, "Welcome great-armed increaser of Kausalyā's joy!" And Bharata's elder brother gazed upon those thousands of cupped hands that were extended by the people of the city and that were like so many full-blown lotuses.

[42–46] Then, taking Rāma's sandals, Bharata, who knew righteousness, himself placed them on the feet of the lord of men. Cupping his hands in reverence, Bharata said to Rāma: "Here, your majesty, is your well-guarded kingdom, which I have now given back. Today the purpose of my birth has been accomplished and my most cherished wish fulfilled, in that I see you returned to Ayodhyā once more as king. Sir, please inspect the treasury, the granary, the city, and the army. Through your blazing energy, I have increased all of them tenfold." When the monkeys and the *rākṣasa* Vibhīṣaṇa saw Bharata speaking in this fashion, with such love for his brother, they shed tears.

[47–51] Then, taking Bharata on his lap in great delight, Rāghava proceeded with his army in the flying palace to Bharata's ashram. Once he reached Bharata's ashram, Rāghava, together with his army, descended

from atop the flying palace and stood on the ground. Rāma then addressed that unsurpassed flying palace, saying: “You must now carry the god Kubera Vaiśravaṇa. I give you leave. You may go.” Given leave by Rāma, that unsurpassed flying palace departed in a northerly direction to the abode of Kubera, bestower of wealth. And then, just as Śakra, lord of the immortal gods, might grasp the feet of Bṛhaspati, mighty Rāghava clasped the feet of his *purohita*, who was his equal. Then they sat down together, each on a separate, splendid seat.

Sarga 116

[1–5] Cupping his hands to his forehead in reverence, Bharata, increaser of Kaikeyī’s joy, addressed his elder brother, truly valorous Rāma: “You showed my mother respect and gave over the kingdom to me. I now give it back to you, just as you once gave it to me. I am no more able to bear this heavy burden than could a young calf bear a yoke set down by a powerful but solitary bullock. I think that any threat facing the kingdom, if unaddressed, would be as difficult to remedy as it would be to repair a dike that, breached by a tremendous flood of water, has sprung a leak. Your majesty, tamer of your foes, I am no more able to follow the path you have blazed than is a donkey to match the speed of a horse, or a crow to match that of a *haṃsa*.

[6–12] “A tree planted in one’s inner court might grow to a great height, impossible to climb with its huge trunk and many branches. But after coming into blossom, it might wither and fail to bear fruit. And thus he for whose sake it was planted would reap no benefit from it. This is merely an analogy, great-armed lord of men. But if you do not rule us, your devoted servants, you will come to realize its significance. Let the whole world see you consecrated this very day, shining with radiant energy like the blazing sun at noon. You should fall asleep and waken to the sounds of musical ensembles, the jingling of women’s anklets and girdles, and the sweet sounds of singing. As long as the wheel of heavenly bodies shall turn and as long as the earth, bearer of wealth, shall endure, so long may you exercise lordship over all in this world.” Upon hearing Bharata’s words, Rāma, the conqueror of enemy citadels, accepted them, saying, “So be it,” as he sat on his splendid seat.

[13–18] Then, at the command of Śatrughna, skillful barbers with a gentle touch and quick at their work attended upon Rāghava. Once Bharata, immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa, the monkey lord Sugrīva, and the *rākṣasa* lord Vibhīṣaṇa had all bathed before him, Rāma gave up his matted locks and bathed. Then, wearing multicolored garlands and unguents and clad in costly garments, he stood there, blazing with splendor. Thus did mighty and splendid Śatrughna, increaser of the House of Ikṣvāku, see to the adornment of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Then the virtuous wives of Daśaratha themselves saw to the ravishing adornment of Sītā. Finally, with great care, Kausalyā, delighted and deeply fond of her son, beautified all the wives of the Rāghavas.

[19–20] Then, at the command of Śatrughna, the charioteer named Sumantra yoked a chariot that was richly adorned throughout and brought it up. When he saw that heavenly chariot standing before him and blazing like the orb of the sun, great-armed and truly valorous Rāma mounted it.

[21–23] Meanwhile, those ministers of King Daśaratha who had remained in Ayodhyā, placing the *purohita* at their head, purposefully took counsel together. They took counsel with regard to the prosperity of Rāma and the maintenance of the city, saying, "Preceding all your actions with auspicious rites, you must do everything necessary for the consecration of great Rāma, so worthy of success." Having thus instructed the *purohita*, all the ministers quickly left the city, their minds intent on seeing Rāma.

[24–30] Like blameless, thousand-eyed Indra mounting his chariot yoked to bay steeds, Rāma mounted his chariot and proceeded toward the splendid city. Bharata held the reins and Śatrughna the umbrella, while Lakṣmaṇa waved a fan over Rāma's head. Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, held one white yak-tail fly whisk, while Vibhīṣaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, held another as bright as the moon. In the heavens was heard the sweet sound made by the hosts of seers and gods, together with the Maruts, as they praised Rāma. Then Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, filled with immense blazing energy, mounted an elephant named Śatruṃjaya, as huge as a mountain. The other monkeys too, who had taken on human form and were adorned with every ornament, mounted nine thousand elephants and set forth. Thus, to the sound of conches, cheers, and the thundering of war drums, did the tiger among men proceed toward the mansion-garlanded city.

[31–35] And as the great chariot-warrior Rāghava, radiant with splendor, passed in his chariot with his retinue, the people gazed upon him. Congratulating Rāma Kākutstha and graciously acknowledged by him, they followed the great man, who was accompanied by his brothers. Like the moon surrounded by the constellations, Rāma, surrounded by the brahmans, his ministers, and his subjects, shone with splendor. As he proceeded, he was accompanied by musicians who went before him, holding cymbals and *svastikas* in their hands, and by delighted people shouting out blessings. And before Rāma went cows, maidens, and twice-born brahmans, bearing unhusked, golden rice, and men with sweetmeats in their hands.

[36–39] Rāma then told his counselors about his friendship with Sugrīva, the supernatural strength of Hanumān, the son of Anila, and the deeds of the monkeys. When the people of Ayodhyā heard this, they were wonderstruck. After reporting all of this, Rāma, resplendent and surrounded by the monkeys, made his entrance into Ayodhyā, which was thronged with delighted and prosperous people. Then, as the citizens raised flags on house after house, he reached his father's lovely residence, the ancestral home of the Ikṣvākus. When he reached the palace of his great father, he entered it and respectfully saluted Kausalyā, Sumitrā, and Kaikeyī.

[40–43] Then the prince, the delight of the Raghus, sweetly addressed Bharata, foremost among the righteous, with these significant words: "Place at Sugrīva's disposal my vast and splendid palace, the one adjacent to the *aśoka* grove and covered with pearls and lapis." When truly valorous Bharata had heard those words of his, he took Sugrīva by the hand and entered that dwelling. Then, ordered by Śatrughna, servants entered at once holding oil lamps and bed coverings.

[44–46] Rāghava's younger brother, of immense blazing energy, then said to Sugrīva, "Lord, you must dispatch emissaries in connection with Rāma's consecration." At once, Sugrīva gave four golden vessels, adorned with every gem, to four of the monkey lords, saying, "Monkeys, you must act in such a way that you are waiting for me at daybreak with these four vessels filled, respectively, with water from each of the four oceans."

[47–52] Addressed in this fashion, those great monkeys, as huge as elephants, swiftly flew up into the sky, like so many Garuḍas, swift in flight. Jāmbavān, Hanumān, the monkey Vegadarśin, and Ṛṣabha then fetched pitchers full of water. And in urns they brought the waters of five

hundred rivers. From the eastern ocean, Suṣeṇa, endowed with might, fetched a pitcher adorned with every gem and filled with water. Ṛṣabha swiftly brought water from the southern ocean. Gavaya brought a golden vessel covered with camphor and red sandalwood paste. In it was water from the vast western ocean. He whose power was that of Māruta and whose pace that of Garuḍa or the wind swiftly brought frigid water from the northern ocean in a great jeweled urn.

[53–59] Then Śatrughna, together with his ministers, presented that water to the foremost of *purohitas* and his assistants for the purpose of Rāma's consecration. Then the aged and devout Vasiṣṭha, together with the brahmans, seated Rāma and Sītā on a jeweled throne. Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Jābāli, Kāśyapa, Kātyāyana, Suyajña, Gautama, and Vijaya all consecrated that tiger among men with fragrant and pellucid water, just as the Vasus consecrated thousand-eyed Indra Vāsava. And thus, in great delight, with that water and with the extracts of all the different herbs, did they perform the consecration, first with the sacrificial priests and brahmans, and then with maidens, counselors, soldiers, and merchants, as well as with the divinities who were hovering in the sky, the four world guardians, and all the assembled gods. Śatrughna held his splendid white umbrella. Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, held one white yak-tail fly whisk, while Vibhīṣaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, held another as bright as the moon.

[60–63] Then, on the orders of Vāsava, Vāyu gave Rāghava a golden necklace with a hundred lotuses that glowed with splendor. And on the orders of Śakra, he also gave the lord of men a pearl necklace strung with every sort of jewel and adorned with an immense gem. The gods and *gandharvas* sang and the troops of *apsarases* danced at the consecration of wise Rāma, who so richly deserved it. And on the festive occasion of Rāghava's consecration, the land grew rich in grain, the trees heavy with fruit, and the flowers redolent with fragrance.

[64–67] First, that bull among men made gifts to the twice-born brahmans of a hundred bulls and a hundred thousand each of cows that had newly calved and horses. Next, Rāghava gave the brahmans three hundred million gold pieces as well as costly jewels and garments of every kind. Then that bull among men gave Sugrīva a heavenly diadem of gold encrusted with gems and shining like the rays of the sun. And as he was greatly pleased with Aṅgada, the son of Vālin, Rāma gave him a pair of

armlets adorned with diamonds and gems and variegated with lapis and jewels.

[68–73] Rāma then presented Sītā with an unsurpassed pearl necklace set with the finest gems, its luster equal to that of moonbeams. Then, keeping her eyes on her husband, Vaidehī gave the son of Vāyu two spotless and divine garments as well as splendid ornaments. Unfastening the necklace from her neck, the delight of Janaka looked back and forth repeatedly from her husband to all the tawny monkeys. Rāma, skillful at divining people's true intentions, looked closely at Janaka's daughter and said, "Beloved and charming lady, you should give the necklace to him with whom you are pleased, that is, to him in whom might, valor, and wisdom are ever present." Then that dark-eyed woman gave the necklace to the son of Vāyu. Wearing that necklace, Hanumān, bull among monkeys, looked as resplendent as a mountain wreathed with a white cloud illuminated by a flood of moonlight.

[74–76] Then the lord of the earth, that scorcher of his foes, after some thought, gave every desirable thing to Dvivida, Mainda, and Nīla. And all the senior-most monkeys and the other monkey lords as well were honored according to their merit with garments and ornaments. When each one of them had been honored according to his merit with many jewels and other desirable things, they all returned as they had come, delighted at heart.

[77–79] Supremely magnanimous Rāghava then ruled in supreme felicity. And Rāma, who loved righteousness, said to Lakṣmaṇa, a knower of righteousness: "Knower of righteousness, please govern with me this land of which those kings who came before us took possession with their forces. In the capacity of prince regent, you must, as my equal, bear this burden, which was borne by our forefathers." But although Saumitri was being offered the position of prince regent of the land and was most earnestly entreated to accept this appointment, he would not do so. So great Rāma therefore consecrated Bharata.

[80–83] Once righteous Rāghava had obtained that unsurpassed kingdom, he performed many different kinds of sacrifices, together with his friends, his brothers, and his kinsmen. That bull among kings performed the *pauṇḍarīka*, *aśvamedha*, and *vājapeya* sacrifices many times, as well as various other sacrifices. Rāghava ruled his kingdom for ten thousand years and performed one hundred *aśvamedha* sacrifices with splendid sacrificial horses and generous sacrificial fees. With broad shoulders and his arms

extending to his knees, valorous Rāma ruled the land with Lakṣmaṇa at his side.

[84–90] While Rāma ruled the kingdom, no widows mourned, nor was there any fear of snakes or threat of disease. The world was free from thieves, and misfortune afflicted no one. The elders never had to perform the funerary rites for their children. Everyone was content. Everyone was devoted to righteousness. Looking constantly to Rāma alone, people did not harm one another. While Rāma ruled the kingdom, people lived for thousands of years and had thousands of sons. They suffered no illness and were free from all sorrow. The trees with their spreading boughs were always in flower and filled with fruit. Parjanya brought the rains at the proper time, and the breeze was pleasant to the touch. While Rāma ruled, his subjects adhered to their own proper occupations and were satisfied with their own duties. Devoted to righteousness, they adhered always to the truth. Everyone was endowed with auspicious marks. Everyone was devoted to righteousness. And so, for ten thousand years, Rāma ruled his kingdom.

The end of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*.

a Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
b Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
c Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
d Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
e Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
f Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
g Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
h Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
i Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
j Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
k Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
l Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
m Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
n Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
o Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
p Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
q Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
r Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
s Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
t Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
u Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.

v Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
w Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
x Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
y Emendation: see PVR 6: 1561.
z Emendation: see PVR 6: 1562.
aa Emendation: see PVR 6: 1562.
bb Emendation: see PVR 6: 1562.
cc Emendation: see PVR 6: 1562.

Chapter 7
The *Uttarakāṇḍa*

Sarga 1

[1–5] Now that the slaughter of the *rākṣasas* had been accomplished and Rāma had attained sovereignty, all the seers came to felicitate Rāghava. There were those who dwelt in the east: Kauśika, Yavakrīta, Raibhya, Cyavana, and Kaṇva, the son of Medhātithi. And then, together with Agastya, came those who dwelt in the south: holy Svastyātreya, Namucu, and Pramucu. Next, together with their disciples, came those who dwelt in the west: Pṛṣadgu, Kavaṣa, Dhaumya, and the great seer Raudreya. And there were also the seven great seers: Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, Atri, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, and Bharadvāja.

[6–8] When these great seers, whose radiance was like that of Agni, eater of oblations, reached Rāghava's dwelling, they paused so that their arrival could be announced. So then, hastening at the words of Agastya, the doorkeeper quickly entered the presence of great Rāghava. Rushing in to see Rāma, whose splendor was equal to that of the full moon, he reported that Agastya had arrived together with the seers.

[9–11] When the king heard that the sages, whose radiance was like that of the newly risen sun, had arrived, he then said to the doorkeeper, "Have them enter as they please." Seeing that those sages had arrived, Rāma rose, his hands cupped in reverence, and devoutly bade them be seated. Those bulls among seers then took their places according to their merit on comfortable seats, which were splendidly covered and variegated with gold.

[12–18] Once Rāma had inquired about their well-being, the great seers, knowers of the *veda*, together with their leaders and their disciples, said these words to him: "All is well with us, great-armed delight of the Raghus, since, thank heavens, we see that you, having slain your enemies, are well. By no means did Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, present you with a serious challenge. For, armed with your bow, there is no doubt that you could conquer the three worlds. Thank heavens, Rāma, you have slain

Rāvaṇa together with his sons and grandsons. Thank heavens we see you victorious together with your wife. Thank heavens you have slain those night-roaming *rākṣasas* Prahasta, Vikaṭa, Virūpākṣa, Mahodara, and the unassailable Akampana. Thank heavens, Rāma, you struck down in battle Kumbhakarṇa, whom no one in this world exceeded in sheer size. And thank heavens you engaged in single combat with the lord of the *rākṣasas* —whom even the gods could not kill—and achieved victory.

[19–22] "The defeat of Rāvaṇa in battle was no great thing. But thank heavens you engaged in single combat with Indrajit Rāvaṇi and slew him. Thank heavens, great-armed hero, you were freed from that foe of the gods, who rushed onward like Kāla himself, and so you achieved victory. We were amazed, gentle Rāma, upon hearing that Indrajit had been slain; for he was invulnerable to all beings and wielded powerful illusion in battle. Having granted us this holy and precious gift, freedom from fear, heroic Kākutstha, tormentor of your foes, you are to be congratulated on your victory."

[23–27] When Rāma had heard that speech of the contemplative seers, he was greatly amazed, and, cupping his hands in reverence, he said: "Why is it, sirs, that you pass over those two immensely powerful warriors Kumbhakarṇa and the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa only to praise Indrajit Rāvaṇi? Why is it that you pass over those immensely powerful warriors Mahodara, Prahasta, and the *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa only to praise Indrajit Rāvaṇi? What was his power like? What was his strength? What was his valor? And what was the reason that he surpassed even Rāvaṇa? I am not commanding you, but if I am permitted to hear it, if it is not a secret, and if you can tell me, I wish to hear it. Please tell me. How did he conquer Śakra and how did he obtain his boons?"

Sarga 2

[1–3] When the pot-born sage, immensely powerful Agastya, had heard this speech of great Rāghava, he spoke these words: "Listen, your majesty, to how he came to possess his enormous power of blazing energy, how he slaughtered his enemies in battle, and how he came to be invulnerable to his foes. I shall tell you, Rāghava, about Rāvaṇa's lineage, his birth, and how the gift of boons was conferred upon him.

[4–9] “Long ago, Rāma, in the Kṛta Yuga, there lived the lordly brahman-seer named Pulastya. He was just like Grandfather Brahmā, as he was, indeed, the son of Prajāpati, lord of creatures. His virtues in respect to righteousness and conduct need not be rehearsed. All this can be inferred merely from his epithet ‘the son of Prajāpati.’ Because of his profound devotion to righteousness, that bull among sages went to the ashram of Tṛṇabindu on the slopes of the great mountain Meru, where he made his dwelling. That righteous sage, restraining his senses through vedic recitation, practiced austerities. But some young girls, having come to that ashram, distracted him. For the daughters of the gods and great serpents, as well as the *apsarases* and the daughters of the royal seers, used to come to that place in the course of their play. Because those woodlands were so lovely and enjoyable in every season, those young girls would always come to that place to play.

[10–15] “Then, furious, that great sage of immense blazing energy declared, ‘Any young girl who comes within sight of me shall become pregnant.’ When they heard those words of the great sage, all the girls who had been coming there were fearful of the danger of the brahman’s curse and came to that place no more. But the daughter of the royal seer Tṛṇabindu did not hear that, and so she went to his ashram and wandered about unafraid. Now, at that very time, that great seer, the son of Prajāpati, shining with radiance through his austerities, was engaged in vedic recitation. No sooner had she heard the sound of vedic recitation and caught sight of that sage, so rich in austerities, than she grew pallid and showed clear signs of pregnancy. When she saw the appearance of her body, she was terrified. Thinking, ‘What has happened to me?’ she went and stood before her father.

[16–19] “Now, when Tṛṇabindu saw her in such a condition, he said, ‘How could you have come to have so unseemly an appearance?’ But the young girl, dejected and cupping her hands in reverence, said to that sage so rich in austerities: ‘I don’t know the reason, father, why I look this way. But earlier I went alone to the heavenly ashram of the contemplative great seer Pulastya to look for my friends. I didn’t see that a single one of my friends had come there. But when I saw the transformation of my appearance, I came straight back here.’

[20–23] “Then the royal seer Tṛṇabindu, shining with radiance through his austerities, entered into meditation and saw that this had come about through the action of the seer. He realized that this was the curse of the great contemplative sage. Taking his daughter, he went to Pulastya and said this: ‘Great seer, holy one, please accept as alms this daughter of mine, who is adorned with her own virtues and has offered herself willingly. And you should have no doubt that she will constantly devote herself to your service as you are subduing your senses in the practice of austerities.’

[24–27] “Even as that righteous royal seer was saying these words, the twice-born sage, eager to accept the girl, said to him, ‘Very well.’ After the king had given her away, he returned to his own ashram. But as for his daughter, she dwelt there, pleasing her husband with her virtues. Then, delighted, that sage of immense blazing energy spoke these words: ‘Bless you, I am greatly pleased with the abundance of your virtues. Therefore, I shall this very day grant you a son who will be my equal in virtues. He shall continue both our lineages and shall be renowned as Paulastya. And since you overheard the *vedas* as I was reciting them, he shall, no doubt, also be renowned as Viśravas.’

[28–29] “Addressed in this fashion, that young girl, with a delighted heart, soon gave birth to a son, Viśravas. That bull among sages, Viśravas, endowed with austerity like his father and filled with purity and righteousness, was famed throughout the three worlds.”

Sarga 3

[1–7] “Now, within a short time, Pulastya’s son, that bull among sages Viśravas, became established in austerity just like his father. He was truthful, virtuous, skillful, pure, and devoted to vedic recitation. He was wholly detached from all objects of the senses and was constantly devoted to righteousness. When the great seer Bharadvāja came to know of his virtuous conduct, he gave him his daughter, Devavarṇinī, to be his wife. That bull among sages, Viśravas, filled with the greatest delight, accepted Bharadvāja’s daughter in keeping with righteousness. With her, that righteous sage had a truly extraordinary child, filled with power and endowed with all the virtues of a brahman. When he was born, his grandfather was delighted. Then, in his delight, he chose a name for him, in consultation with the divine seers, saying, ‘Since he is the offspring of

Viśravas and because he is so like him, he shall be renowned by the name of Vaiśravaṇa.'

[8–13] "Then, retiring to a penance-grove there, Vaiśravaṇa grew great as one of immense blazing energy, like a fire into which oblations are offered. While that great sage was dwelling in his ashram, this idea occurred to him: 'Controlling myself, I shall practice righteousness; for righteousness is the highest recourse.' He performed austerities in the great forest for thousands of years. And after each period of a thousand years, he adopted a different ascetic practice. Thus, he lived in turn only on water, only on air, and then on no sustenance at all. And so, in this fashion, thousands of years passed like a single year. Then, pleased, Brahmā of immense blazing energy came to his ashram, together with Indra and the hosts of the gods, and said this: 'I am greatly pleased with you, my child of excellent vows, and with your deeds. Please choose a boon, for I think that you deserve one.'

[14–19] "Vaiśravaṇa then said to Grandfather Brahmā, who stood before him, 'Holy one, I wish to be a world guardian and the keeper of all wealth.' And so, with a delighted mind, Brahmā addressed Vaiśravaṇa, together with the hosts of the gods, happily saying: 'Excellent! I was just about to add a fourth to the group of world guardians—Yama, Indra, and Varuṇa—the very position that you seek. You shall have this position that I have created, knower of righteousness, and you shall obtain the lordship of all wealth. This very day you shall be the fourth among the world guardians—Yama, Indra, and Varuṇa. And please accept this flying palace called Puṣpaka, as radiant as the sun, to be your vehicle. You shall be the equal of the thirty gods. Farewell! We shall all now depart just as we came. In having awarded you this great boon, my son, we have accomplished our purpose.'

[20–22] "When the gods, preceded by Brahmā, had departed for the heavens, the lord of wealth, prostrating himself in humility, said these words to his father: 'Holy one! I have obtained a boon from the lotus-born Brahmā Prajāpati. But that god did not ordain a dwelling for me. Therefore, holy lord, please think of some place for us to dwell where there would be no harm to any living being.'

[23–26] "When Viśravas, that bull among sages, had been addressed in this fashion by his son, that knower of righteousness spoke these words: 'Listen, knower of righteousness. There is a city called Laṅkā, built by

Viśvakarman as a dwelling for the *rākṣasas*. It is as lovely as Indra's Amarāvatī. It is an exquisite city with gateways of gold and lapis. It was abandoned long ago by the *rākṣasas*, who were overcome with terror of Viṣṇu. And so it has been emptied of the hosts of *rākṣasas*, who have all fled to the underworld Rasātala. You should resolve to live there. There will be nothing wrong with your dwelling there, and no one will be harmed by it.'

[27–31] "Then, when the righteous Vaiśravaṇa had heard his father's extremely righteous words, he settled in Laṅkā, which was situated on a mountaintop. In a very short time, at his command, Laṅkā was filled with thousands of *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, who were excited and always happy. And so the son of Viśravas—that righteous lord of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos—dwelt happily there in ocean-shrouded Laṅkā. From time to time, taking the Puṣpaka flying palace, the dutiful lord of wealth in great delight would visit his mother and father. Haloed with splendor and lauded by the hosts of gods and *gandharvas*, who were accompanied by the perfected beings and celestial bards, he resembled the sun haloed with radiance, together with its rays, as he approached his father."

Sarga 4

[1–7] When Rāma heard the words that Agastya had uttered to the effect that there had been *rākṣasas* in Laṅkā even before that time, he was astonished. Then, shaking his head in astonishment and gazing fixedly at Agastya, whose appearance was like that of the three sacrificial fires, he spoke. "So, holy one, Laṅkā belonged to the flesh-eating *rākṣasas* even before that time. Upon hearing this from you, sir, I am astonished. We had always heard that the *rākṣasas* sprang from the lineage of Pulastya. But now you have said that their origin was from somewhere else. Were those *rākṣasas* more powerful even than Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Prahasta, Vikaṭa, and the sons of Rāvaṇa? Who was their progenitor, O brahman? What was his name? What was the power of his austerities? And what crime did they commit that they were driven out long ago by Viṣṇu? Please tell me all about this in detail, blameless sage. Just as the sun dispels the dark, please dispel this curiosity that has been produced in me."

[8–13] When Agastya had heard Rāghava's words, adorned as they were with such refinement, he was mildly astonished, and he said to him: "In the

beginning, lotus-born Prajāpati, who was born from the waters, created the waters and then created creatures to protect them. Oppressed with the fear of hunger and thirst, those creatures stood humbly before their creator, saying, 'What are we to do?' And Prajāpati, gently smiling, replied to those creatures. That bestower of self-esteem addressed them with these words: 'You must stand guard diligently.' The creator of beings was then addressed by those who were not hungry, who said, 'We shall stand guard [*rakṣāmaḥ*],' and also by the others who were hungry, who said, 'We shall eat [*yakṣāmaḥ*].' And he said to them, 'Let those among you who said, "We shall stand guard," be the "*rākṣasas*," and let those among you who said, "We shall eat," be the "*yakṣas*."'

[14–18] "Now, among the former, there were two brothers Heti and Praheti. Those two bulls among the *rākṣasas* were tamers of their foes just like Madhu and Kaiṭabha. Of the two of them, righteous Praheti did not desire a wife, while Heti made strenuous efforts to get married. And so the immeasurable and highly intelligent Heti of his own accord married Kāla's sister, the terrifying maiden named Bhayā. With her, that bull among *rākṣasas* Heti, foremost of those possessing sons, fathered a son known as Vidyutkeśa. And Heti's son, Vidyutkeśa, whose radiance was equal to that of a blazing fire and who possessed immense blazing energy, grew like a lotus in the midst of the waters.

[19–22] "When that night-roaming *rākṣasa* attained the splendid bloom of youth, his father undertook to arrange his marriage. On his behalf, that bull among *rākṣasas*, Heti, asked for the daughter of Sandhyā, who was like Sandhyā, "Twilight," herself in radiance. Thinking, 'She must be given away to someone,' Sandhyā gave her daughter to Vidyutkeśa, O Rāghava. And the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Vidyutkeśa, having obtained Sandhyā's daughter, made love with her, just as does munificent Indra with Paulomī.

[23–26] "Now, after some time, Rāma, Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā became pregnant by Vidyutkeśa, just as a bank of storm clouds becomes laden with water from the ocean. Then that *rākṣasa* woman went to Mount Mandara, where she gave birth to a child, as lustrous as lightning, the child of the clouds, just as the Ganges gave birth to the child born of Agni. But no sooner had she given birth to Vidyutkeśa's child than, eager to make love, she forgot all about the son that had been born to her and made love with her husband. Abandoned by her, that infant, whose radiance was equal to that of the

autumnal sun, put his hand in his mouth and cried like a mighty thundercloud.

[27–31] “At that very time, Lord Hara, mounted on his bull, together with Umā, was passing by through the heavens and spied the weeping *rākṣasa* child. Moved by Pārvatī’s tenderheartedness, Bhava, the slayer of Tripura, made the *rākṣasa* child the same age as its mother. And moreover, in his desire to please Pārvatī, Mahādeva, who is indestructible and unchangeable, made him immortal and gave him a city that could fly through the sky. And, O prince, for her part, Umā granted this boon to *rākṣasa* women such that they should conceive and deliver a child at the very same moment and that the child should instantly become the same age as its mother. Then Sukeśa, having received such divine majesty from Lord Hara, was proud at having received those boons. And because he had obtained that city that could fly through the sky, that highly intelligent *rākṣasa*, moving through the sky, traveled everywhere, just like Indra, the smasher of citadels.”

Sarga 5

[1–4] “Now, when the *gandharva* named Grāmaṇī, who was equal in radiance to Viśvāvasu, saw that the *rākṣasa* Sukeśa was righteous and had received those boons, he gave him, in accordance with righteousness, his daughter named Devavatī, who was like a second Śrī, goddess of fortune, just as Dakṣa gave Śrī herself. Once she had acquired her beloved husband, who was endowed with lordly power through the gift of those boons, Devavatī was as happy as a pauper who has come into wealth. With her at his side, that night-roaming *rākṣasa* looked as splendid as a great bull elephant—a descendant of Añjana—with his cow.

[5–7] “And, Rāghava, the *rākṣasa* lord Sukeśa fathered three sons with Devavatī. They were the *rākṣasas* Mālyavān, Sumālin, and Mālin, foremost among the mighty, and they were the equals of the three-eyed lord, Śiva. They were as imperturbable as the three worlds, and they were as well established as the three sacred fires. They were as formidable as the three *mantras* and as terrible as the three dreaded diseases. The three sons of Sukeśa, whose splendor was equal to that of the three sacred fires, continued to grow there like illnesses that have been neglected.

[8–10] “Realizing that their father had obtained boons and enormous lordly power, the brothers then went to Mount Meru and resolved to perform austerities. And, O foremost of kings, taking fearsome vows, they practiced fearsome austerities that were terrifying to all beings. With these austerities—so hard to accomplish in this world and practiced with truth, sincerity, and self-control—they tormented the three worlds, including the gods, *asuras*, and men.

[11–14] “Then, mounted in a splendid flying chariot, the four-faced Lord Brahmā addressed the sons of Sukeśa, saying, ‘I am the granter of boons.’ Recognizing that Brahmā, who was accompanied by Indra and the hosts of gods, was the granter of boons, they all cupped their hands in reverence and, trembling like trees, said: ‘If, O lord, you are pleased with our austerities and wish to grant us a boon, then may we become unconquerable slayers of our enemies, long-lived, powerful, and devoted to one another.’ ‘It shall be so!’ said the Lord to the sons of Sukeśa. Then Brahmā, who is so fond of brahmans, departed for the Brahmaloka.

[15–19] “Then, Rāma, once they had obtained that boon from him, all those night-roaming *rākṣasas* became quite fearless through the gift of the boon, and they harried the gods and *asuras*. Being slaughtered by them, the thirty gods, together with the hosts of seers and the celestial bards, could find no one to save them any more than can men who have gone to hell. Then, best of the Raghus, those *rākṣasas* came together and, in great delight, said to the imperishable Viśvakarman, the foremost of artisans: ‘You, sir, are the builder of the mansions of the gods. Please, O highly intelligent lord, build one for us as well, such as our heart desires. Whether resting on Himalaya, Meru, or Mandara, please build a great mansion for us, just like the mansion of Maheśvara.’

[20–26] “Then great-armed Viśvakarman told those *rākṣasas* about a dwelling place that was just like Śakra’s Amarāvatī. ‘On the shore of the southern ocean stands the mountain called Trikūṭa. On its cloudlike middle peak, inaccessible even to the birds and leveled on all four sides by stonecutters’ tools, I, instructed by Śakra, have built a city called Laṅkā. It is thirty leagues in breadth, and its ramparts and gateways are of gold. You unassailable and most excellent *rākṣasas* should dwell in that city, just as in Amarāvatī do the gods, the denizens of heaven, together with Indra. Once you, surrounded by many *rākṣasas*, have settled in the citadel of Laṅkā, you

will be unassailable by your enemies, O destroyers of your foes.' When those *rākṣasas* had heard these words of Viśvakarman, Rāma, they went with thousands of followers to the city of Laṅkā and dwelt there. Once those night-roaming *rākṣasas* had taken possession of Laṅkā with its moats and massive ramparts and with its hundreds of golden mansions, they were delighted and dwelt there happily.

[27–30] "At that time, there was a *gandharva* woman by the name of Narmadā, who had prospered through her various virtues. And she had three daughters, who were equal in splendor to Hrī, the goddess of modesty, Śrī, the goddess of good fortune, and Kīrti, the goddess of fame. Although she was not a *rākṣasa* woman, she happily gave her daughters, whose faces were like the full moon, to those three *rākṣasas* in order of their age. And thus were those three illustrious *gandharva* maidens given by their mother to the three *rākṣasa* lords under the lunar asterism presided over by Bhaga, the god of marriage. Once the sons of Sukeśa were married, Lord Rāma, they amused themselves with their wives, just as do the immortal gods with the *apsarases*.

[31–32] "Mālyavān's wife was the beautiful Sundarī. Now learn of the offspring that he fathered with her. They were Vajramuṣṭi, Virūpākṣa, the *rākṣasa* Durmukha, Suptaghna, Yajñakopa, and Matta and Unmatta as well. And, Rāma, Sundarī had a beautiful daughter named Analā.

[33–36] "And Sumālin too had a wife, whose face was like the full moon. Her name was Ketumatī, and she was dearer to him than life itself. Now, your majesty, learn, in due order, of the offspring that the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Sumālin fathered upon Ketumatī. And these are known as the offspring of Sumālin: Prahasta, Akampana, Vikaṭa, Kālakārmuka, Dhūmrākṣa, Daṇḍa, immensely powerful Supārśva, Saṃhrādi, Praghasa, the *rākṣasa* Bhāsakarṇa, Rākā, Puṣpotkaṭā, Kaikasī of the bright smile, and Kumbhīnasī.

[37–39] "And as for Mālin, his wife was the beautiful and lovely-eyed *gandharva* woman named Vasudā. With her eyes like lotus petals, she was equal to the foremost of *yakṣa* women. And now, Lord Rāghava, hear from me, as I relate them, the offspring that the younger brother of Sumālin fathered with her. Those night-roaming *rākṣasas*, the sons of Mālin, were Anala, Anila, Hara, and Saṃpāti, and they became the ministers of Vibhīṣaṇa.

[40–41] “Then those three bulls among the *rākṣasas*, arrogant in their strength and valor, surrounded by hundreds of their sons and the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, harassed the gods—including Indra—the seers, great serpents, and *dānavas*. In their overwhelming arrogance at the gift of their boons, those *rākṣasas*, unstoppable as a mighty gale, tore through the world. Intent and equal to Mṛtyu himself in battle, they constantly destroyed the sacred rites.”

Sarga 6

[1–2] “Since the gods as well as the seers, so rich in austerities, were being slaughtered by those *rākṣasas*, they were overwhelmed by fear and took refuge with Maheśvara, the god of gods. Coming together, the gods cupped their hands in reverence, and, their speech choked with fear, they addressed the three-eyed foe of Kāma and Tripura:

[3–7] “ ‘O holy lord of all creatures, harrier of your foes! All creatures are being harried by the sons of Sukeśa, who have become arrogant through the boons of Grandfather Brahmā. Our ashrams, which were places of refuge, no longer offer sanctuary. Śakra has been cast out of heaven, and they disport themselves there as if they were he. Crying, “I am Viṣṇu! I am Rudra! I am Brahmā! I am Indra, king of the gods! I am Yama! I am Varuṇa! I am Candra, the moon god! I am Ravi, the sun god!” those *rākṣasas*, O lord, arrogant through the gift of their boons and reveling in battle, harry us as do their followers. So please, Lord, grant us protection, as we are overcome with fear. Please take on a fearsome form and slay them who are a thorn in the side of the gods.’

[8–10] “When he had been addressed in this fashion by all of the gods, the dark blue lord of the matted locks, being partial to Sukeśa, said this to the hosts of the gods: ‘I shall not slay them, for these *asuras* are not to be killed by me. However, I shall give you some advice that will surely bring about their death. You must exert yourselves in the following manner, O bulls among gods! You must go for refuge to Viṣṇu. That lord will kill them.’

[11–16] “Then, once they had extolled Maheśvara with cries of ‘Be victorious!’ they approached Viṣṇu, afflicted as they were by fear of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*. Afflicted with fear of Sukeśa’s sons, they prostrated themselves and honored the god who bears the conch and the

discus. In their agitation, they spoke these words: ‘Through the gift of their boons, O God, the three sons of Sukeśa, who resemble the three sacred fires, have attacked us and usurped our places. Situated on the peak of Mount Trikūṭa, there is a fortified citadel called Laṅkā. With that as their base, those night-roaming *rākṣasas* harass us all. As a favor to us, please kill them, Madhusūdana. Please make an offering to Yama of their lotuslike faces severed by your discus. For when danger arises, there is none to equal you as grantor of protection for us. Please dispel this danger to us, Lord, as the sun, bringer of light, does the mist.’

[17–20] “When he had been addressed in this fashion by the gods, the god of gods, Janārdana, who inspires fear in his enemies, granted protection and said to the gods: ‘I realize that the *rākṣasa* Sukeśa has grown arrogant through the boon of Lord Śiva. And I also know about his sons, of whom Mālyavān is the eldest. I shall slaughter in battle those lowest of *rākṣasas*, who have transgressed all bounds. You need not be anxious, O gods.’ Addressed in this fashion by the powerful Lord Viṣṇu, the gods all returned in great delight to their respective abodes, praising Janārdana.

[21–22] “Now, when the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Mālyavān heard about the mission of the wise gods, he said this to his two heroic brothers: ‘I have heard that the gods and seers, desiring to bring about our death, have joined forces and have said this to three-eyed Śaṅkara:

[23–25] “ ‘ “O lord, the fearsome-looking sons of Sukeśa, arrogant because of the power of the boons they have been given, have put forth their energies and are harrying us at every step. We have been defeated by the *rākṣasas*, O lord of Umā, and, for fear of those evil creatures, we cannot even remain in our own homes. Therefore, for our sake, O three-eyed Lord, please kill them all. O foremost of those who burn! Burn up those *rākṣasas* by uttering the syllable ‘Hum.’ ”

[26–28] “ ‘Addressed in this fashion by the thirty gods, Śiva, the slayer of Andhaka, first listened and then, shaking his head and his hand, said this: “It is not for me to kill the sons of Sukeśa in battle, O gods. However, I will give you some advice that will surely bring about their death. But Janārdana, who wears yellow garments and holds the discus and mace in his hands, will slay them in battle. You must approach him for refuge.”

[29–32] “ ‘Not having received what they desired from Hara, they respectfully saluted that foe of Kāma and then, proceeding to the abode of

Nārāyaṇa, reported everything to him. Then the gods, headed by Indra, were addressed thus by Nārāyaṇa: "I shall slaughter the foes of the gods. You need not be anxious, O gods." Thus, O bulls among *rākṣasas*, Hari has vowed to the terrified gods to kill us. Therefore, you must think of some appropriate response. For he was the death of Hiraṇyakaśipu and other foes of the gods. This Nārāyaṇa, who desires to kill us, is extremely difficult to defeat.'

[33–38] "Then, when Sumālin and Mālin had heard Mālyavān's words, they spoke to their elder brother as might Bhaga and Aṃśa to Vāsava. 'We have studied the *vedas*, given charitably, offered sacrifices, and safeguarded our sovereignty. We have lived a healthy life and have adhered to our proper duties. With mighty rivers in the form of our weapons, we have plunged deep into the imperturbable ocean that is the host of the gods. We have always defeated them in battle. For us there is no fear of death. Nārāyaṇa, Rudra, Śakra, and Yama—all of them fear to stand before us. It is no fault of Viṣṇu that is the cause of this, O lord of the *rākṣasas*. It is the fault of the gods alone that Viṣṇu's mind has been stirred up. Therefore, this very day, putting forth our energies and surrounded by all of our troops, we shall willingly slaughter the gods on account of whom this trouble has arisen.'

[39–42] "When Mālin and Sumālin and their elder brother, the lord Mālyavān, had declared their plan in this fashion, all three *rākṣasas* marched forth in a rage to battle, just like Jambha, Vṛtra, and Bala. Then, arrogant in their strength, all the *rākṣasas*, enemies of the gods, leaving Laṅkā in order to do battle, set out for the world of the gods mounted on chariots, splendid elephants, horses as huge as mountains, donkeys, cattle, camels, dolphins, serpents, crocodiles, tortoises, fish, birds that resembled Garuḍa, lions, tigers, boars, gaur, and yaks.

[43–47] "Meanwhile, all those beings who dwelt in Laṅkā, foreseeing the destruction of the city and anticipating the danger, became despondent. Then, set in motion by Kāla, dreadful portents swiftly arose on the ground and in the air, presaging the destruction of the *rākṣasa* lords. The clouds rained down bones and hot blood. The ocean breached its shore and the mighty mountains shook. Thousands of malevolent spirits whirled about, dancing and releasing raucous laughter with a sound like that of thunder.

And a great wheeling flock of vultures, spewing fire from their beaks, circled above the *rākṣasas* like the wheel of time itself.

[48–51] “But disregarding those dire omens, the *rākṣasas*, arrogant as they were in their strength and snared in the noose of Mṛtyu, did not turn back but marched onward. The night-roaming *rākṣasas* Mālyavān, Sumālin, and Mālin preceded them, just as the three sacred fires precede the sacrificial rites. All the night-roaming *rākṣasas* placed their faith in Mālyavān, unshakable as Mount Mālyavān, just as all creatures place their faith in the Creator. Thundering like a great bank of storm clouds, that army of the *rākṣasa* lords, desirous of victory, under Mālin’s command marched upon the world of the gods.

[52–53] “Now, when Lord Nārāyaṇa had heard from a messenger of the gods about the expedition of the *rākṣasas*, he resolved to fight. Lauded by the *apsarases* and the foremost *gandharvas* and wielding his excellent discus, sword, ploughshare, and the rest, together with the gods, perfected beings, seers, and great serpents, he advanced upon the army of the enemies of the gods.

[54–55] “With its divisions driven back by the wind from Suparṇa’s wings, its pennants flapping and its weapons scattered, the army of the *rākṣasa* king was shaken like a dark lord of mountains, its boulders shaken loose. Then, surrounding Mādhava in their thousands, the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, whose appearance was like that of the fire at the end of a cosmic era, riddled him with their splendid weapons, sharp and stained with blood and flesh.”

Sarga 7

[1–8] “Just as storm clouds pelt a mountain with torrential rains, thundering storm clouds in the form of *rākṣasas* pelted that mountain in the form of Nārāyaṇa with torrents of arrows. Surrounded by the dark chieftains of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, dark and lustrous Viṣṇu resembled a mountain of collyrium shrouded by clouds releasing torrential rains. As locusts swarm into a field of grain and flies enter a mountain, as living beings might plunge into a pot of nectar or crocodiles into the sea, indeed, as all the worlds enter him at the time of universal destruction, so, loosed from the *rākṣasas*’ bows, did those arrows, powerful as thunderbolts and swift as the wind or thought itself, plunge into Hari. With arrows, javelins,

broadswords, and iron cudgels, those mountainous *rākṣasa* lords—the chariot-warriors with their chariots, the elephant riders with their elephants, the cavalrymen with their splendid steeds, and the foot soldiers moving through the air—made Hari hold his breath as the exercise of breath control does a twice-born brahman. Harried by the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, like a mighty whale by shoals of fish, Viṣṇu drew his horn bow, and, in that great battle, with his swift thunderbolt-headed arrows drawn back fully and then released, he cut into pieces no bigger than sesame seeds the bodies of the *rākṣasas* in their hundreds and thousands.

[9–12] "Driving away that hail of arrows, as does the wind a shower of rain that has sprung up, Viṣṇu, the Supreme Spirit, winded his great conch, Pāñcajanya. Mightily winded by Hari, that king of conches, born of the waters, sounded with a fearsome roar like a storm cloud at the end of a cosmic era. The blare of that king of conches terrified the *rākṣasas* as a lion, the king of beasts, does forest elephants in rut. The horses could not keep their footing, and the elephants were stripped of all their ardor. The warriors tumbled from their chariots, unmanned by the blare of the conch.

[13–16] "Released from his horn bow, his well-fletched arrows, their heads like thunderbolts, tore through the *rākṣasas* and plunged into the earth. Pierced by the arrows loosed from Nārāyaṇa's bow, the remaining fearsome *rākṣasas* fell like mountains struck by lightning. Those injurious and inimical *rākṣasas* gushed forth blood in streams from the wounds inflicted by Adhokṣaja's arrows, just as mountains might a golden stream. The blare of that king of conches, the twang of the horn bow, and Viṣṇu's war cry drowned out the cries of the *rākṣasas*.

[17–23] "Like the fierce rays of the sun or waves of the ocean, like serpent lords from a mountain or like torrents of water from a storm cloud, so did those arrows—arrows loosed from the horn bow and set in motion by Nārāyaṇa—fly swiftly onward in their hundreds and thousands. Put to flight by powerful Viṣṇu, just like lions by a Śarabha, elephants by a lion, tigers by an elephant, leopards by a tiger, dogs by a leopard, cats by a dog, snakes by a cat, or rats by a snake, some of the *rākṣasas* fled in battle, while others lay sprawled on the ground. When Madhusūdana had slain thousands of *rākṣasas*, he made his conch, born of the waters, resound, as the king of the gods does a storm cloud. Overwhelmed by Nārāyaṇa's arrows and utterly

dazed by the blare of his conch, the *rākṣasa* host broke ranks and fled toward Laṅkā.

[24–27] “When the *rākṣasa* host, battered by Nārāyaṇa’s arrows, had broken ranks, Sumālin covered Hari with a hail of arrows in battle. Raising a gold-ornamented hand, as an elephant might its trunk, the *rākṣasa* roared in his excitement like a cloud laced with lightning. But even as Sumālin roared, Viṣṇu cut off his charioteer’s head, with its flashing earrings, so that the *rākṣasa*’s horses ran wild. The *rākṣasa* lord Sumālin was dragged away by those horses as they ran wild, just as is a man lacking self-control, by the horses in the form of the senses when they run wild.

[28–29] “Seizing a bow and arrows, Mālin raced forward in battle. Loosed from Mālin’s bow, his arrows, adorned with gold, struck Hari and passed through him like birds through Mount Krauñca. Assailed by those arrows loosed by Mālin in their thousands, Viṣṇu was no more shaken in battle than is a man who has subdued his senses troubled by worldly cares.

[30–32] “Then, twanging his bowstring, the holy creator of all beings, bearer of the sword and mace, released a torrent of arrows upon Mālin. Those arrows, whose brilliance was like that of the *vajra* or lightning, struck Mālin’s body and drank his blood just as, long ago, the great serpents drank the nectar. Hari powerfully struck down Mālin’s diadem, chariot, battle standard, bow, and horses, forcing Mālin to retreat.

[33–36] “Robbed of his chariot, Mālin, foremost of night-roaming *rākṣasas*, seized a mace and with it in hand sprang up, as might a lion from a mountain peak. With that mace he struck Garuḍa on the forehead in battle, just as Yama, the ender of all things, struck Lord Śiva or as Indra might strike a mountain with his *vajra*. Violently struck with that mace by Mālin, Garuḍa, reeling from the pain, forced the god to retreat from the battlefield. After Mālin had made Garuḍa force the god to retreat from the battlefield, a mighty roar arose from the roaring *rākṣasas*.

[37–41] “Even though he had been forced to retreat, Viṣṇu, the younger brother of Indra of the bay steeds, hearing the roar of the roaring *rākṣasas*, hurled his discus in his desire to kill Mālin. Its radiance, like that of the disc of the sun lighting up the heavens with its own radiance, that discus, like the wheel of time itself, severed Mālin’s head. Gushing blood, the fearsome head of the *rākṣasa* lord fell, just as did Rāhu’s long ago. Then the gods in their delight released a cry, uttered with all their might, like a lion’s roar,

shouting, ‘Well done, O God!’ When Sumālin and Mālyavān saw that Mālin had been slain, they were tormented with grief, and, together with their army, they fled back to Laṅkā.

[42–44] “Once great-minded Garuḍa had recouped his strength and turned back, he was enraged and, with the wind of his wings, drove the *rākṣasas* before him. With his thunderbolts in the form of the splendid arrows loosed from his bow, Nārāyaṇa rent the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, their hair broken loose and flying about, just as great Indra, armed with lightning, might with his thunderbolts. Their umbrellas shattered, their weapons fallen, their bodies scattered and torn by arrows, their entrails spilling forth, their eyes rolling in terror, the troops seemed to have gone mad.

[45–47] “The screams and flailing of the night-roaming *rākṣasas* and their elephants—like those of elephants attacked by a lion—were similar to the screams and flailing of those who were slaughtered by the one who was himself a lion long ago. Covered by the mass of Hari’s arrows, those black storm clouds in the form of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, dropping their own masses of arrows, fled like black storm clouds driven by the wind. Their heads severed by blows of the discus, their limbs smashed by blows of the mace, and hacked to pieces by strokes of the sword, the *rākṣasa* lords collapsed like mountains.

[48–50] “Their lotuslike heads were severed by the discus. Their chests were crushed by the mace. Their necks were lopped off by the ploughshare. Their foreheads were shattered by the cudgels. Some were hacked by the sword, while others were struck with arrows. And thus, the *rākṣasas* fell swiftly from the sky into the waters of the ocean. As they were being hurled down with their necklaces and earrings slipping off, the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, resembling black storm clouds, completely filled the sky so that it looked as if it were filled with black mountains that were being hurled down.”

Sarga 8

[1–5] “Now, as the retreating army was being slaughtered by lotus-naveled Viṣṇu, Mālyavān turned back, as does the ocean when it has gone beyond its shore. His eyes red with rage, and, his diadem trembling, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* then addressed these harsh words to lotus-naveled Viṣṇu:

‘Nārāyaṇa, you must not know the immemorial code of the warrior, since like some commoner you are slaughtering us, who have been broken and have no heart to fight. O lord of the gods! A killer who commits the sin of slaying a fleeing foe cannot attain the heaven of the virtuous after death. But if you still crave combat, bearer of the conch, discus, and mace, then here I am. Show me your power! I am watching.’

[6–7] “Then the mighty younger brother of the king of the gods addressed the *rākṣasa* lord, saying: ‘I promised the gods—who were terrified in fear of you—protection in the form of the annihilation of the *rākṣasas*. This is the fulfillment of that. I must always do what pleases the gods, even if it costs me my life. So I will slaughter you all even should you flee to the underworld Rasātala.’

[8–10] “But even as the god, his eyes like red lotuses, was speaking in this fashion, the *rākṣasa* lord, infuriated, pierced him with his javelin and roared. Hurled by Mālyavān’s arm and resounding with the sound of its bells, that javelin, now in Hari’s chest, shone like a bolt of lightning shooting from a storm cloud. But then the lotus-eyed lord, beloved of the javelin-wielder Skanda, pulled out that javelin and taking aim, hurled it at Mālyavān.

[11–13] “Loosed from Govinda’s hand as if hurled by Skanda, that javelin sped onward, heading straight for the *rākṣasa*, like a blazing meteor heading straight for a mountain of collyrium. It fell upon the *rākṣasa* lord’s chest, broad and splendid with the luster of his necklace, like a thunderbolt upon a mountain peak. His armor pierced by that javelin, Mālyavān fell into a profound stupor. But then, once more coming to his senses, he took his stand like an immovable mountain.

[14–17] “Then, seizing a lance of black iron studded with many spikes, he struck the god firmly in the middle of his chest. And then that night-roaming *rākṣasa*, so fond of battle, having struck the younger brother of Vāsava with his fist, stepped back a bow’s length. Then in the sky there arose a mighty cheer, ‘Well done! Well done!’ After striking Viṣṇu, the *rākṣasa* also struck Garuḍa. Enraged, Vainateya drove off the *rākṣasa* with the wind from his wings, just as a powerful gale might a heap of dry leaves.

[18–21] “Now, when Sumālin saw his elder brother driven off by the wind from the wings of the lord of birds, he turned toward Laṅkā and, together with his troops, fled. And the *rākṣasa* Mālyavān, himself having

been driven back by the force of the wind from those wings, was filled with shame and, rejoining his troops, also fled to Laṅkā. In this way, lotus-eyed Rāma, the *rākṣasas*, their foremost leader slain, were broken in battle time and again by Hari. Unable to stand against Viṣṇu in battle and overcome with fear, they abandoned Laṅkā and, together with their wives, went to live in the underworld known as Pātāla.

[22–25] "And so, delight of the Raghus, those *rākṣasas* in the lineage of Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā, renowned for their valor, rallied around the *rākṣasa* Sumālin and dwelt there. Now the *rākṣasas* that you yourself killed, illustrious Rāma, were known as the Paulastyas. But Sumālin, Mālyavān, Mālin, and their followers were all much more powerful than Rāvaṇa. There is no one, conqueror of citadels, even among the gods, who could kill those *rākṣasas* other than Lord Nārāyaṇa, the bearer of the conch, discus, and mace. And you are that God, the eternal four-armed Nārāyaṇa, the unconquerable and unchanging Lord, who took birth in order to slaughter the *rākṣasas*."

Sarga 9

[1–2] "Now, after some time, the *rākṣasa* Sumālin, who with his earrings of burnished gold resembled a black storm cloud, left Rasātala and wandered all over the world of men, taking with him his unmarried daughter, who was like Śrī but for the lotus. Then he spied Kubera, the lord of wealth, going by in the flying palace Puṣpaka.

[3–9] "When the *rākṣasa* saw him going by looking like an immortal god and resembling Agni, the purifier, he spoke to his daughter, who was called by the name Kaikasī. 'Your youth is passing, daughter, it is time to give you away. Intent on practicing righteousness, we have made every effort on your behalf. For you, dear daughter, you are endowed with every virtue, like Śrī with her lotus. Still, you have not been chosen by any suitor out of fear of rejection. For all those concerned about their honor, being a father of an unmarried girl is a burden, since, dear daughter, one does not know who might wish to marry the girl. A young girl will always remain a source of suspicion for three families—that of her mother, that of her father, and the one into which she is given. Daughter, you must approach that foremost of eminent sages Viśravas Paulastya, born in the lineage of Prajāpati, and ask him yourself to marry you. Without a doubt, daughter,

you shall have sons who will be equal in blazing energy to the sun, bringer of light, and who will be just like the lord of wealth.’

[10–13] “At that very time, Rāma, Pulastya’s son, a brahman resembling a fourth sacrificial fire, was performing the *agnihotra* rite. Taking no thought for that fearsome hour out of respect for her father, she approached and stood before the seer, her gaze lowered to her feet. Looking at that fair-hipped woman, her face like the full moon, the highly illustrious sage, blazing, as it were, with his vital energy, spoke: ‘Whose daughter are you, my good woman? Where have you come from and for what reason? What can I do for you? Tell me truthfully, lovely lady.’

[14–15] “Addressed in this fashion, the young girl cupped her hands in reverence and then said: ‘Please determine my intention through your own power, sage. But, brahman, you must know that I have come here on my father’s instructions, and that I am known by the name Kaikasī. Please determine the rest for yourself.’

[16–18] “Entering into meditation, the sage said these words: ‘My good woman, I have discovered the purpose that you have in mind. However, since you approached me at a fearsome hour, now learn what kind of sons you will bear. Fair-hipped woman, you shall give birth to *rākṣasas* of cruel deeds. They shall be fearsome, fearsome in appearance, and devoted to their fearsome kin.’

[19–20] “Now, when she had heard these words, she prostrated herself and spoke these words: ‘Holy one, sons such as these are not worthy of you, a descendant of Lord Brahmā.’ Then, regarding her concern, the sage said, ‘Your youngest son shall be righteous and worthy of my lineage.’

[21–25] “After some time, Rāma, the young girl, who had been addressed in this fashion, gave birth to a horrendous and very fearsome child, who had the form of a *rākṣasa*. He had ten heads, huge fangs, and he looked like a heap of black collyrium. He had coppery lips, twenty arms, huge mouths, and hair that glowed like fire. The moment he was born, jackals, their mouths emitting flames, and other carnivorous beasts circled in a clockwise direction. The god rained down blood, and the clouds made a harsh rumbling. The sun vanished from the sky, and great meteors crashed to the ground. Then his father, who was the equal of Grandfather Brahmā, gave him his name: ‘He was born with ten heads, and so he shall be called Daśagrīva, “Ten-necked.”’

[26–30] “Immediately after him was born the immensely powerful Kumbhakarṇa, whom no one in this world exceeded in sheer size. Then were born Śūrpaṇakhā, with her hideous face, and Kaikasī’s youngest son, the righteous Vibhīṣaṇa. There, in the great forest, they grew to be immensely powerful beings. But among them, it was the cruel ten-necked Rāvaṇa who was a source of terror to the worlds. And as for the reckless and evil Kumbhakarṇa, he roamed about, terrifying the three worlds and devouring the great seers, who were devoted to righteousness. But as for righteous Vibhīṣaṇa, never deviating from the path of righteousness, he lived with his senses controlled, practicing vedic study and restricting his diet.

[31–34] “Now after some time, the divine lord of wealth came there in his flying palace, the Puṣpaka, to see his immensely powerful father. When Kaikasī saw Kubera there, blazing, as it were, with his blazing energy, she, thinking like a *rākṣasa*, said to ten-necked Rāvaṇa: ‘My son, look at your brother, who is haloed with blazing energy. And then, even though your status as his brother makes you his equal, just look at your own condition. Daśagrīva, my son of immeasurable valor, you must exert yourself so that you will quickly become just like Vaiśravaṇa.’

[35–37] “When powerful ten-necked Rāvaṇa had heard those words of his mother, he was filled with intolerable envy, and he then made this vow: ‘I swear to you truthfully, mother, that I shall soon be my brother’s equal or even his superior. So give up this heartfelt anguish.’ Filled with that jealous rage, ten-necked Rāvaṇa formed a resolution and vowed, ‘I will attain my desire through asceticism.’ Then, together with his younger brothers, he proceeded to the splendid ashram of Gokarṇa in order to accomplish his purpose.”

Sarga 10

[1–2] Then Rāma asked the twice-born brahman, “How did those brothers of great ascetic vows practice their austerities in the forest, and what, O brahman, was the nature of their austerities?” And regarding that, Agastya told Rāma, whose thoughts were focused, about the various righteous practices in which the brothers engaged there.

[3–5] “At that time, Kumbhakarṇa, strictly controlled and constantly devoted to righteousness, practiced the austerity of the five fires during the

hot season. During the rainy season, drenched with rainwater, he assumed the heroic posture, and, during the cold season, he remained constantly immersed in water. In this fashion, ten thousand years passed while he, intent upon righteousness, remained fixed on the path of virtue.

[6–9] “Now as for righteous Vibhīṣaṇa, who was pious and constantly devoted to righteousness, he stood on one foot for five thousand years. When his vow was completed, the troupes of *apsarases* danced, a shower of flowers fell, and the gods became agitated. For yet another five thousand years he gazed steadily at the sun, standing with his arms raised above his head and his mind fixed upon vedic recitation. In this fashion, ten thousand years passed for Vibhīṣaṇa, whose mind was tightly controlled, as they might for a heavenly being in the Nandana garden.

[10–14] “Now as for their ten-faced brother, he remained without food for ten thousand years. And when each full thousand years was completed, he offered one of his heads into the fire as an oblation. And so, in this fashion, nine thousand years passed for him, and nine of his heads entered the fire, eater of oblations. Now at the end of the tenth period of a thousand years, the righteous *rākṣasa* was just about to sever his tenth head when Grandfather Brahmā came there. Greatly pleased, Grandfather Brahmā approached him, along with the gods, and said to him: ‘Daśagrīva! My child! My child! I am pleased. So quickly, knower of righteousness, choose whatever boon you desire. Shall I grant a wish for you so that your exertions shall not have been in vain?’

[15–18] “Then, delighted at heart, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, bowing his head, spoke to the god in a voice stammering with excitement. ‘Holy one, there is nothing that living beings constantly fear other than death. Indeed, there is no foe equal to death, and so I choose immortality. Lord of creatures, let me be forever invulnerable to the great birds, mighty serpents, and *yakṣas*, as well as the *daityas*, *dānavas*, *rākṣasas*, and gods. For, O lord worshiped by the immortal gods, I do not care about other creatures. Indeed, I regard all creatures such as men as if they were mere straws.’

[19–22] “And, Rāma, addressed in this fashion by the *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa, the righteous Grandfather Brahmā, together with the gods, said these words: ‘It will be just as you wish, bull among *rākṣasas*. And now, since I am pleased, hear my additional auspicious words. Those heads that you earlier offered as oblations into the fire, blameless *rākṣasa*, will all

be yours once more, just as they were.’ When the *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa had been addressed in this fashion by Grandfather Brahmā, those heads that had been offered as oblations into the fire materialized.

[23–24] “When Prajāpati, the grandfather of the worlds, had addressed ten-necked Rāvaṇa in this fashion, Rāma, he spoke these words to Vibhīṣaṇa: ‘Vibhīṣaṇa, my child, knower of righteousness, I am pleased with you, for your mind is focused on righteousness.’

[25–28] “Cupping his hands in reverence, righteous Vibhīṣaṇa, ever endowed with every virtue, as is the moon with its beams, said these words: ‘Holy one, I have accomplished my purpose in that you, the *guru* of the worlds, have appeared in person before me. But if you are pleased, hear now, O you of excellent vows, what boon you should give to me. May every thought that I may have in each and every stage of life in this world be supremely righteous. And may I always uphold the righteous conduct appropriate to every stage. Most munificent Lord, I believe this to be the greatest of all boons, for nothing whatever in this world is beyond the reach of those who are devoted to righteousness.’

[29–30] “Then, pleased, Prajāpati said to Vibhīṣaṇa: ‘Since you are so supremely righteous, my child, all of this shall come to pass. Since, tormentor of your foes, no thought of yours is ever unrighteous, even though you are born from a *rākṣasa* womb, I shall grant you immortality.’

[31–34] “But, Rāma, tamer of your foes, just as Prajāpati was about to grant a boon to Kumbhakarṇa, all the gods, their hands cupped in reverence, said these words to him: ‘You must by no means grant a boon to Kumbhakarṇa, for you know how that evil-minded wretch terrorizes the three worlds. In the Nandana garden he has devoured seven *apsarases* as well as ten servants of great Indra. And, Brahmā, he has also devoured seers and men. O lord of immeasurable radiance, under the pretext of a boon, we must befuddle him. And so the welfare of the worlds will be assured, and he himself will be brought down.’

[35–38] “Addressed in this fashion by the gods, Brahmā, born from a lotus, called to mind the goddess Sarasvatī, and she, called to mind, presented herself beside him. Cupping her hands in reverence as she stood beside him, Sarasvatī spoke these words: ‘I have come, Lord. What duty must I perform?’ Then Prajāpati spoke these words to Sarasvatī, who had come to him: ‘O goddess of speech! You must become the speech that the

gods desire to hear from the *rākṣasa* lord.' Saying, 'So be it,' she entered the *rākṣasa*'s mouth. Then Prajāpati said, 'Great-armed Kumbhakarṇa, choose whatever boon you like.'

[39–42] "Now, when Kumbhakarṇa heard those words of his, he spoke these words: 'O God of gods! What I desire is to sleep for many years.' And Grandfather Brahmā said to him, 'So be it.' Then he and the goddess Sarasvatī, together with the gods, left him and proceeded to heaven. But as for evil-minded Kumbhakarṇa, he pondered in his misery: 'What kind of words have issued from my mouth this day and why?' When those brothers of intense blazing energy had all received boons in this fashion, they went to a forest of *śleṣmātaka* trees and dwelt happily there."

Sarga 11

[1–3] "Now, when Sumālin learned that those night-roaming *rākṣasas* had been granted those boons, he abandoned his fear and, together with his followers, came up from Rasātala. The *rākṣasa*'s ministers—Mārīca, Prahasta, Virūpākṣa, and Mahodara—also came up, filled with bitter indignation. And surrounded by all of those bulls among *rākṣasas*, Sumālin approached ten-necked Rāvaṇa and, embracing him, said this:

[4–10] " 'Through great good fortune, my son, you have attained your long-cherished desire in that you have received such a boon from the ruler of the triple world. Our great fear of Viṣṇu, because of which we abandoned Laṅkā and fled to Rasātala, is now banished, O great-armed hero. For, broken by him again and again, we abandoned our own home and, fleeing all together, entered Rasātala. Our own city of Laṅkā, once inhabited by the *rākṣasas*, has now been occupied by your brother, the wise lord of wealth. Indeed, blameless one, if it is possible to get it back, whether by conciliation, bribery, or force, then, great-armed one, it ought to be done. And you, my child, will, without doubt, become the lord of Laṅkā. Thus, immensely powerful warrior, you will become the ruler of us all.' But ten-necked Rāvaṇa replied to his maternal grandfather, who stood before him, 'You must not speak in this fashion. The lord of wealth is our revered elder.'

[11–18] "Then the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Prahasta humbly addressed these purposeful words to ten-necked Rāvaṇa, who had spoken in this fashion: 'Great-armed Daśagrīva, you should not speak in this fashion.

There can be no brotherly affection among heroes. Now listen to these words of mine: It is said that the two exquisitely beautiful sisters Aditi and Diti together became the wives of Prajāpati Kaśyapa. Aditi gave birth to the gods, the lords of the triple world, while Diti gave birth to the *daityas*. They were all sons of Kaśyapa. They say, heroic knower of righteousness, that long ago this earth, together with its forests, oceans, and mountains, belonged to the *daityas*. Thus, they became the more powerful. But then, when the powerful Lord Viṣṇu had slaughtered them in battle, this imperishable triple world was brought under the control of the gods. You, sir, would not be the only one to engage in such enmity, for it was engaged in long ago by the gods themselves. Therefore, you should do as I say.' When ten-necked Rāvaṇa had been addressed in this fashion by the evil-minded Prahasta, he reflected for a moment and then said, 'Very well.'

[19–23] "And so that very day mighty ten-necked Rāvaṇa, filled with delight, proceeded with the night-roaming *rākṣasas* to the forest. When the night-roaming *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa had reached Mount Trikūṭa, he dispatched Prahasta, who was skilled in speech, as a messenger, saying: 'Prahasta! You must go at once and, in a conciliatory manner, using my own words, address this speech to the lord of wealth, that bull among the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos. "Your majesty, this city of Lañkā belongs to the great *rākṣasas*. It is not right, gentle and blameless brother, that you have occupied it. If you, sir, a person of unequaled valor, were to surrender it peacefully, you would be doing me a favor while adhering to righteousness."'

[24–27] "Addressed in this fashion, Prahasta, who was skilled in speech, went and reported the entire speech of ten-necked Rāvaṇa to the lord of wealth. Now, when the divinity Vaiśravaṇa, who was skilled in speech, had heard these words from Prahasta, he replied to him with these words: 'Go and say to Daśagrīva: "The city and kingdom that are mine are yours as well, great-armed hero. Please enjoy them without impediment of any kind. Rest assured, I will shortly do everything that the *rākṣasa* lord has asked, but please wait a bit while I inform our father."'

[28–29] "When the overlord of wealth had spoken in this fashion, he approached his father. After respectfully saluting his elder, he told him what Rāvaṇa wanted: 'Dear father, Daśagrīva has sent me an emissary with the message: "Please give back the city of Lañkā, which was formerly

inhabited by the hosts of *rākṣasas*." So now, sage of excellent vows, tell me what I should do in this matter.'

[30–37] "Addressed in this fashion, that bull among sages, the brahman-seer Viśravas, spoke these words to the giver of wealth: 'Listen, my son, to these words of mine: Great-armed Daśagrīva said this in my presence as well. But I rebuked that extremely evil-minded one, and I warned him repeatedly. I angrily told him again and again, "You will surely bring ruin upon yourself!" But now listen, my son, to these words of mine, which are in keeping with righteousness and will work to your advantage. Deluded by the granting of his boon, this very evil-minded *rākṣasa*, who is of a vicious nature because of my curse, does not know whom he should and should not treat respectfully. Therefore, great-armed hero, you should go to Mount Kailāsa and found a city where you may dwell. You must leave Laṅkā together with your followers. There the best of rivers, the lovely Mandākinī River, flows—its waters covered with golden lotuses as radiant as the sun. For, giver of wealth, you cannot possibly engage in hostilities with this *rākṣasa*. You know how he attained that greatest of boons.' Addressed in this fashion, he accepted those words out of respect for his father and so departed together with his wives, townsfolk, ministers, vehicles, and wealth.

[38–41] "Meanwhile, Prahasta went back to ten-necked Rāvaṇa and reported everything, saying, 'The city of Laṅkā, thirty leagues in breadth, is now deserted. Enter it with us and there carry out the duties of your station.' Then, when the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa had been addressed in this fashion by Prahasta, he entered the city of Laṅkā, along with his brothers, his troops, and his followers. Then the ten-faced *rākṣasa*, consecrated by the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, settled the city. The city thus came to be densely populated with night-roaming *rākṣasas*, who resembled black storm clouds. Then, out of respect for his father's words, the lord of wealth founded on that mountain as bright as the moon a city that was as adorned with well-ornamented mansions as is Amarāvatī, the city of Indra, smasher of citadels."

Sarga 12

[1–2] "Once ten-necked Rāvaṇa had been consecrated as the lord of the *rākṣasas*, he and his two brothers considered giving away in marriage their

sister, the *rākṣasa* woman Śūrpaṇakhā. He gave in marriage his sister, the *rākṣasa* woman called Śūrpaṇakhā, to the *dānava* lord named Vidyujjihva, the son of Kālaka.

[3–4] "Now, Rāma, after giving away his sister in marriage, the king was wandering about hunting when he encountered Diti's son, who was called Maya. Seeing him accompanied only by his daughter, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa asked, 'Who are you, sir, who stay alone in this forest unpeopled save by wild beasts?'

[5–13] "And then, Rāma, Maya said to that night-roaming *rākṣasa*, who was inquiring: 'Please listen. I will tell you everything about myself, just as it happened. As you may have heard, my boy, there is an *apsaras* named Hemā. She was given to me in marriage, just as was Paulomī to Indra of the hundred sacrifices. For five hundred years, my boy, I was infatuated with her. But now this is the fourteenth year since she has been gone in the service of the gods. For Hemā's sake, I then constructed through my creative power an entire city of gold, inlaid with diamonds and lapis. But finding no pleasure there without her, in my great sorrow, I took my daughter out of that city and came to this forest. This is my daughter, your majesty, nourished in Hemā's womb. I came here with her to find her a husband. For men concerned about their honor, being a father of an unmarried girl is a great trouble. A young girl will always remain a source of suspicion for two families. And I also had two sons with my wife. The first, my boy, was Māyāvin followed by Dundubhi. Since you are inquiring, I have told you all of this just as it took place. But now, my boy, may I know who you are?'

[14–16] "Addressed in this fashion, the lord of the *rākṣasas* courteously said this: 'I am Daśagrīva by name, the son of Paulastya.' Now, no sooner had Maya learned that ten-necked Rāvaṇa was the son of a brahman-seer than, delighted, he decided to give him his daughter in marriage right then and there. Smiling, the *daitya* lord said these words to the lord of the *rākṣasas*: 'Your majesty, here is my daughter, the maiden named Mandodarī, who was borne by the *apsaras* Hemā. Please accept her as your wife.'

[17–19] "And, Rāma, ten-necked Rāvaṇa said, 'So be it!' Then, kindling a sacred fire on that very spot, he took her hand in marriage. For, Rāma, Maya was unaware of the curse that ten-necked Rāvaṇa had received from

his father, who was so rich in austerities. Therefore, recognizing that his lineage derived from his grandfather, Maya gave her to him in marriage. He also gave him an extremely marvelous and infallible javelin, which he had obtained through the most severe austerities—the very same one with which Rāvaṇa later struck down Lakṣmaṇa.

[20–25] "When he had taken a wife in this fashion, the mighty lord of Laṅkā returned to the city and had his two brothers each marry a wife. Rāvaṇa had Kumbhakarṇa take as his wife Vairocana's granddaughter, who was named Vajrajvālā. Vibhīṣaṇa, a knower of righteousness, took as his wife the daughter of Śailūṣa, the great king of the *gandharvas*. Her name was Saramā. She was born on the shore of Lake Mānasa, and once, during the rainy season, dear boy, Lake Mānasa flooded. Then, in her love for her daughter, her mother uttered this wailing cry: 'O lake! Do not flood!' For that reason she was named Sara-mā, 'Flood Not.' Having thus taken wives, those *rākṣasas* enjoyed themselves there, each with his own wife, just as do the *gandharvas* in the Nandana garden.

[26–29] "Then Mandodarī gave birth to a son, Meghanāda, the one you refer to by the name Indrajit. No sooner had he been born than, crying, that son of the *rākṣasa* unleashed a tremendous roar, which was like that of a thundercloud. Since all of Laṅkā was stupefied by that roar of his, his father himself gave him the name Meghanāda, 'Cloud Thunderer.' Then, Rāma, he grew up in Rāvaṇa's splendid inner apartments, hidden by beautiful women as is fire by firewood."

Sarga 13

[1–7] "Now, after some time, intense drowsiness brought on by Brahmā, lord of the worlds, took hold of Kumbhakarṇa. Kumbhakarṇa then said these words to his brother, who was seated before him: 'Drowsiness overwhelms me, your majesty. Please have them build an abode where I may sleep.' Then, commanded by the king, artisans who were like Viśvakarman himself constructed an abode for Kumbhakarṇa that resembled Mount Kailāsa. And so they built one for Kumbhakarṇa that was a league in width and twice that in length. It was splendid, exquisite, and flawless. It was adorned everywhere with columns variegated with crystal and gold. Its luster was enhanced by lapis, and it was filled with masses of little bells. It was surrounded by gateways of ivory and filled with raised

platforms of diamond and crystal. It was ever delightful in all seasons like a sacred cavern of Mount Meru. There the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Kumbhakarṇa fell asleep, and he lay there for many thousands of years without waking.

[8–10] "Once Kumbhakarṇa had been overcome by sleep, ten-faced Rāvaṇa continually harassed the gods, seers, *yakṣas*, and *gandharvas*. Going to the magnificent heavenly gardens, Nandana and the rest, the ten-faced Rāvaṇa tore them up in his tremendous rage. As a playful elephant might roil a river, a driving wind might scatter trees, or the loosed *vajra* might shatter mountains, he constantly wrought destruction.

[11–15] "When Vaiśravaṇa, the lord of wealth, came to know that ten-necked Rāvaṇa was acting in such a fashion, that knower of righteousness, reflecting upon the conduct befitting his lineage, sent a messenger to Laṅkā for the benefit of ten-necked Rāvaṇa and to demonstrate his own fraternal affection. Proceeding to the city of Laṅkā, the messenger met Vibhīṣaṇa. The latter honored him in keeping with righteousness and inquired as to why he had come. After inquiring about the well-being of his king and his king's relatives on both sides of the family, Vibhīṣaṇa presented him to ten-faced Rāvaṇa, who was seated in his assembly hall. When the messenger saw the king there radiant with his own blazing energy, he addressed him reverently with blessings of victory and then stood silent for a moment.

[16–17] "Once the messenger had taken his seat on a couch that had been brought for him and which was covered with fine cushions, he said these words to ten-necked Rāvaṇa: 'Your majesty, I will report to you everything that your brother has said. It is, kind sir, in keeping with the conduct and lineage of both of you:

[18–20] " ' "Enough! The course of conduct you have adopted has gone far enough. Enough! If at all possible, you must establish yourself in righteousness. For I have seen the Nandana garden destroyed, and I have heard that seers have been slain. But I have also heard, your majesty, of the measures the gods are taking against you. You have spurned me, time and time again, lord of the *rākṣasas*, and, in your folly, you have committed crimes against your own kinsmen, whom you should have been protecting.

[21–24] " ' "But I had gone to the slopes of the Himalayas in order to practice righteousness, undertaking a vow to Rudra, controlling my senses, and maintaining self-control. There I saw that powerful god, together with

the goddess Umā, and it was there that I cast my left eye upon the goddess. I did so merely wondering, ‘Who can this lovely woman be?’ and for no other reason, since Pārvatī had taken on incomparable beauty and was dallying there. Nonetheless, because of the radiance of the goddess, my left eye was burned so that its sight grew dim as if obscured by dust.

[25–30] “ ‘ “Then I proceeded to another broad slope of that mountain and fully performed a great vow for a full eight hundred years. When those austerities were completed there, the god Lord Maheśvara was delighted, and, with a delighted heart, he spoke these words: ‘Lord of wealth! You of excellent vows! Knower of righteousness! I am pleased with these austerities of yours, for I myself have performed this vow as you have. No third person could perform such a vow, for this vow, which I devised long ago, is all but impossible to perform. Therefore, lord of wealth, please accept my friendship. Since I have been won over by your austerities, you must become my friend, sinless lord. And since, through the splendor of the goddess your left eye was burned, your name shall forever remain Ekākṣipiñgala, “Dusky in One Eye.”’

[31–32] “ ‘ “When I had earned the friendship of Śañkara in this fashion and taken my leave of him, I returned. Only then did I hear of your evil intentions. And so, defiler of your lineage, you must desist from indulgence in such extreme unrighteousness, for even now the gods, together with the hosts of seers, are considering a strategy for your destruction.”’

[33–37] “When he had been addressed in this fashion, ten-necked Rāvaṇa was enraged, and his eyes grew red. Clenching his fists and his teeth, he spoke these words: ‘I know, messenger, the real meaning of these words that you have spoken. Neither you nor my brother who sent you shall live! The guardian of wealth is not saying this for my benefit. Instead, fool, you are merely boasting about his friendship with Maheśvara. I always thought, “I must not kill him, for he is my elder and my superior.” But now, after hearing his words, this is exactly what I intend to do. This very hour, relying on the strength of my arms, I shall conquer the three worlds, and, on account of just one of them, I shall send all four world guardians to the abode of Yama.’

[38–39] “When the lord of Lañkā had spoken in this fashion, he killed the messenger with his sword and gave him to the evil-minded *rākṣasas* to eat. Then, once he had performed benedictory rites, Rāvaṇa mounted his

chariot and, eager to conquer the three worlds, proceeded to where the lord of wealth was."

Sarga 14

[1–3] "Majestic Rāvaṇa then marched forth, as if to burn up the worlds in his anger. He was surrounded by six ministers, who were ever arrogant in their might. Those that accompanied him were Mahodara, Prahasta, Mārīca, Śuka, Sāraṇa, and the mighty Dhūmrākṣa, who was ever eager for battle. Passing towns, rivers, mountains, parks, and woodlands, in a short time he reached Mount Kailāsa.

[4–7] "When the *yakṣas* had heard that the *rākṣasa* lord was encamped on the mountain, they said, 'It is the king's brother!' and went to where the lord of wealth was. They went and told him all about his brother's intention, and, granted permission by the giver of wealth, they marched off to battle. There was a great surge of agitation in the army of the king of the *rākṣasas*, sons of chaos, as in the ocean when it floods. It seemed to shake the very mountain. Then there arose a battle swarming with *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas* in which the *rākṣasa*'s ministers were sorely afflicted.

[8–11] "When the night-roaming *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa saw that his fighters were in such a plight, he unleashed a roar in his excitement, and, in a rage, he rushed to the attack. Fearsome in their valor, each one of the *rākṣasa* lord's ministers then engaged in battle with a thousand of those thousands of foes. Although he was being struck with maces, iron clubs, swords, javelins, and iron cudgels, ten-necked Rāvaṇa plunged into the *yakṣa* army. Being struck by those weapons there, ten-faced Rāvaṇa, nearly breathless, was closely pressed on every side by the *yakṣa* lords, as if by pelting storm clouds.

[12–17] "Then that evil-minded *rākṣasa*, raising his mace, which was like the rod of Kāla, plunged into the army of the *yakṣas*, sending them to Yama's abode. Just as a fire driven by the wind might consume a vast, parched woodland filled with dry tinder, he consumed that very fearsome army. Just like clouds decimated by the winds, the *yakṣas* were all but destroyed in battle by his ministers, Mahodara, Śuka, and the rest. Some of them fell on the battleground, their limbs hacked off by weapons. Others were knocked to the ground, biting their lips with their sharp teeth. Clutching one another in terror, their weapons fallen on the battlefield,

some of the *yakṣas* then collapsed like the banks of a river undercut by the current. What with the slain, who, after fighting on the surface of the earth, had ascended to heaven, and the hosts of seers, who were watching from there, there was no room left in the heavens.

[18–20] "At this juncture, Rāma, an enormous *yakṣa* named Saṃyodhakaṇṭaka arrived with a large host of troops and mounts. Struck down by that *yakṣa* as if by Viṣṇu himself, Mārīca fell and crashed to the earth, as someone might fall from the heavens when his merit is exhausted. Regaining consciousness after a moment, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* composed himself and then engaged that *yakṣa* in battle. The latter, broken, fled.

[21–25] "Then, at the perimeter, watched over by the gatekeepers, Rāvaṇa breached the gateway, every part of which was ornamented with gold and which was inlaid with lapis and silver. But, Rāma, a gatekeeper known as Sūryabhānu blocked the night-roaming *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa as he was entering. Tearing up the gateway, the *yakṣa* struck him with it. Although the *rākṣasa* was struck by the gateway hurled by the *yakṣa*, he was not injured, Rāma, because of the boon of Brahmā, who was born from the waters. And then, with that very same gateway, he struck down that *yakṣa*. Pulverized, the *yakṣa* simply vanished. Witnessing his valor, all of the *yakṣas* fled. Oppressed by terror, they then entered the rivers and caves."

Sarga 15

[1–5] "Then, seeing that the *yakṣas* had fled in their hundreds and thousands, the lord of wealth himself went forth to battle. There was an all-but-invincible *yakṣa* there by the name of Māṇicara. Surrounded by four thousand *yakṣas*, he gave battle. Those *yakṣas* charged the *rākṣasas*, striking them in battle with maces, cudgels, darts, javelins, iron cudgels, and war hammers. Nonetheless, Prahasta slew a thousand of them in battle, while Mahodara slew another thousand with his mace. And then, Rāma, the evil-minded Mārīca, enraged, struck down two thousand in the blink of an eye.

[6–10] "In that great battle, Māṇibhadra confronted Dhūmrākṣa. Although he was angrily struck in the chest with a cudgel, he was not shaken. Then the *rākṣasa* Dhūmrākṣa was struck on the head by

Māṇibhadra, who was whirling his mace. Stunned, he collapsed. When ten-faced Rāvaṇa saw that Dhūmrākṣa had been struck and, drenched with blood, had fallen, he charged at Māṇibhadra in a towering rage. But as he charged toward him in his rage, like the fire blazing up at the end of a cosmic era, that bull among *yakṣas* pierced him with three javelins. But he, in turn, was then struck with a mace by the *rākṣasa* king in battle. Because of that blow, his diadem was knocked to one side, and, from that time onward, that *yakṣa* was known as Pārśvamauli, 'He of the Sideways Diadem.'

[11–13] "When the great *yakṣa* Māṇibhadra had retreated, Rāma, a deafening cheer arose on that mountain. Then, accompanied by Śaṅkha and Padma, the lord of wealth, bearing a mace, appeared from afar with Śukra and Proṣṭhapada. Seeing his brother, who because of the curse was deprived of all sense of decorum, the wise Kubera, there in the midst of battle, addressed him in words that were befitting the lineage of their grandfather:

[14–21] " 'Although I tried to stop you, evil-minded wretch, you did not understand. Only after you have received your just deserts and have gone to hell will you come to realize this. A foolish man who mistakenly drinks poison without knowing it will, once it has taken effect, nonetheless come to realize the consequences of his action. Indeed, the gods take delight only in one who is righteous. It is because of this that you have been reduced to such a state, and you do not even realize it. A person who disrespects his mothers, fathers, brothers, and preceptors will experience the fruit of that once he has come under the power of the king of the dead. The fool who fails to amass austerities while still in this impermanent body will later, once dead, come to regret it when he sees where he has gone. No evil-minded person spontaneously acquires good judgment. A person experiences the fruit of whatever action he performs. Intellect, beauty, strength, wealth, sons, and greatness—men obtain all of this through the previous actions they have performed. And thus, you, whose mind is of such a nature, will surely go to hell. I shall not speak with you again, as this is the proper resolution with regard to one of evil ways.'

[22–25] "When Kubera had spoken in this fashion, he assailed Rāvaṇa's ministers. All of them, headed by Mārīca, turned tail and fled en masse. Then, although the great *yakṣa* lord struck him on the head with his mace, ten-necked Rāvaṇa did not give any ground. After that, Rāma, the two,

assailing each other in fierce combat, were neither shaken nor fatigued and remained unyielding. Then, in battle, the bestower of wealth loosed the divine weapon of Agni, but ten-necked Rāvaṇa parried that divine weapon with that of Varuṇa.

[26–28] "Now, having recourse to the *rākṣasas*' power of illusion, the *rākṣasa* lord, whirling his huge mace, struck the bestower of wealth on the head. Struck in this fashion with that, the lord of wealth, shaken and drenched with blood, fell like an *aśoka* tree cut off at the roots. Then the presiding deities of his treasuries, Padma and the rest, brought the lord of wealth, that bestower of wealth, to the Nandana grove and there revived him.

[29–31] "And now, Rāma, when the lord of the *rākṣasas* had defeated the bestower of wealth, he seized his flying palace Puṣpaka as a token of his victory. It was enclosed by golden columns, and its gateways were of lapis and gemstones. It was covered with fretworks of pearls and had trees that bore whatever was desired as their fruit. Having vanquished the god Vaiśravaṇa, the king mounted that flying palace, which was steered by its owner's will and which he had won through his valor, and descended from Mount Kailāsa."

Sarga 16

[1–5] "Now, Rāma, once the lord of the *rākṣasas* had vanquished his brother, the bestower of wealth, he then proceeded to the Śaravaṇa, the birthplace of Skanda Mahāsena. Ten-necked Rāvaṇa then gazed upon the golden Śaravaṇa, which, haloed with a mass of rays, resembled a second sun, bringer of light. But as he approached that mountain, he spied some other lovely grove, and there, Rāma, the Puṣpaka was brought to a halt in the sky. Perceiving that the Puṣpaka, which had been steered by its owner's will, had been stopped and rendered motionless, the *rākṣasa*, surrounded by his ministers, fell to brooding. 'What is the reason that the Puṣpaka does not move for me? Who on this mountain could have done this?'

[6–9] "Then Mārīca, skilled in discernment, said to ten-necked Rāvaṇa, 'It cannot be, your majesty, that the Puṣpaka does not move without a reason.' Then, coming up beside him, Nandīśvara, the mighty servant of Bhava, boldly said this to the *rākṣasa* lord: 'You must turn back, Daśagrīva, for Śaṅkara is dallying on this mountain. Therefore, the mountain has been

forbidden to the great birds, great serpents, *yakṣas*, *daityas*, *dānavas*, *rākṣasas*, and, indeed, to all living beings.'

[10–12] "Ten-necked Rāvaṇa, his eyes red with rage, descended from the Puṣpaka and saying, 'Who is this Śaṅkara?' he approached the base of the mountain. He glared at Lord Nandīśvara, who, like a second Śaṅkara, stood close by, holding a blazing lance. Seeing that he had a monkey's face, the *rākṣasa* regarded him with contempt, and, as might a storm cloud charged with rain, in his folly, he unleashed a roar of laughter.

[13–16] "Then, infuriated, the blessed Lord Nandin, like a second body of Śaṅkara, addressed the *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa, who was standing there: 'Since, evil-minded *rākṣasa*, in your folly, you were contemptuous when you saw me in my simian form and roared with laughter, monkeys—bearing my form and with blazing energy equal to my might—will be born for the destruction of your race. But although I am well able to deal with you here and now, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, I must not kill you. For you have already been slain by your own actions.'

[17–19] "However, heedless of Nandin's words, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* approached the mountain and said these words: 'I shall tear up this mountain of yours by its roots, lord of cattle, on account of which the passage of Puṣpaka was interrupted while I was traveling. By what authority does Bhava dally there, as if he were a king? You do not realize, as you should, what a dangerous situation is at hand.'

[20–24] "After having spoken in this fashion, your majesty, he thrust his arms under the mountain and then hefted it together with its deer, its beasts of prey, and its trees. Then, Rāma, Mahādeva, smiling when he saw what ten-necked Rāvaṇa had done, playfully pressed down the mountain with his big toe. Then the *rākṣasa*'s arms, which were beneath the mountain, were crushed, on account of which his ministers were astonished. In his rage and because of the crushing of his arms in this fashion, the *rākṣasa* released a tremendous cry that filled the three worlds. Terrified by that sound, people thought that it was the end of the world. Even the gods were disturbed as they discharged their duties.

[25–29] "But, your majesty, Mahādeva, resting on the summit of the mountain, was pleased. Freeing ten-faced Rāvaṇa's arms, he spoke these words to him: 'I am pleased with your might and boldness, night-roaming *rākṣasa*. The howl you released in your agony as you cried out was truly

terrifying. And since this triple world, reverberating with your cries, was terrified, you shall be known by the name “Rāvaṇa.” Therefore, the gods, humans, *yakṣas*, and everyone else in this world will call you Rāvaṇa, “He Who Makes the Worlds Reverberate with His Cries.” Go now, Paulastya, without fear, by whatever path you choose. I grant you leave, lord of the *rākṣasas*. You may go.’

[30–31] “And so, having been given his name by Maheśvara Mahādeva, Rāvaṇa first reverentially saluted him and then mounted his flying palace. Then, Rāma, Rāvaṇa roamed the earth, oppressing mighty kshatriyas wherever he went.”

Sarga 17

[1–5] “Then, your majesty, while wandering the earth, great-armed Rāvaṇa reached the Himalayan forests and roamed about there. There he spied a young woman wearing black antelope skin and matted locks. She was engaged in asceticism according to the ordinances of the seers, and she looked like a goddess. When he saw that beautiful young woman observing severe penitential vows, his mind was overcome with lust and delusion. Laughing softly, he asked her: ‘Lovely lady, why are you living like this? It is completely unsuitable to your youth. Such perverse behavior is not at all consonant with your beauty. Lovely lady, whose daughter are you? Or who, blameless lady, is your husband? Tell me at once, since I am asking you. For what purpose do you amass these austerities?’

[6–10] “Addressed in this fashion by the ignoble *rākṣasa*, that young woman, rich in austerities, performed the rites of hospitality for him according to custom and then said: ‘My father was the righteous brahman-seer named Kuśadhvaja. He was the majestic son of Bṛhaspati, and he was Bṛhaspati’s equal in intellect. I am his daughter, born from that great being who was ever engaged in vedic recitation. As an incarnation of vedic speech, I am known by the name Vedavatī. Then the gods, along with the *gandharvas*, as well as the *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, and great serpents, approached my father and asked for my hand in marriage. But my father did not give me to them, lord of the *rākṣasas*. Listen, great-armed hero, and I shall tell you the reason.

[11–13] “ ‘They say that it was Viṣṇu, foremost of the gods and lord of the three worlds, whom my father intended as his son-in-law, and that is

why that righteous man did not want to give me to anyone else. Upon hearing that, the king of the *daityas*, Śambhu by name, arrogant in his strength, was furious. And so that wicked creature killed my father as he slept at night. Then my illustrious mother, desolate, embraced my father's body and entered the fire with him.

[14–17] " 'And so the wish is firmly lodged in my heart that I will make my father's dream with respect to Nārāyaṇa come true. Having thus vowed that I will fulfill my father's desire even though he has departed, I am engaged in extensive austerities. I have now told you everything, bull among *rākṣasas*. Know that I am resorting to righteousness in my desire to make Nārāyaṇa my husband. I know all about you, your majesty. So please go away, delight of the Paulastyas. For through my austerities, I know everything that transpires in the three worlds.'

[18–21] "But Rāvaṇa, tormented by the arrows of Kandarpa, the god of love, descended from atop his flying palace and there addressed that young woman of very severe vows: 'You are very arrogant, fair-hipped lady, in that you entertain such a resolution. The amassing of righteous actions, fawn-eyed woman, is an adornment only of the elderly. Timorous woman, you are endowed with every virtue and are indeed the most beautiful woman in the triple world. You ought not in your youth be acting in such a manner that is fitting only for the elderly. Who, after all, is this individual to whom you refer as Viṣṇu? Surely, lovely lady, he whom you so desire is not equal to me in valor, asceticism, wealth, or strength, my lady.'

[22–27] " 'Don't do this! Don't!' cried the young woman to that night-roaming *rākṣasa*, as he seized her by the hair with his hand. Enraged, Vedavatī then cut off her hair with her hand. Eager to end her life, she kindled a fire and said: 'As I have been violated by you, ignoble wretch, my life is at an end. Therefore, *rākṣasa*, I shall enter the fire, the eater of oblations, right before your very eyes. Since I, innocent and without a protector, have been violated, I shall be born again for your destruction. Truly it is not possible for a woman to kill anyone, least of all you, evil *rākṣasa*. Moreover, were I to unleash a curse, it would exhaust the power of my asceticism. If I have performed good deeds, made charitable donations, and offered sacrificial oblations, then, by virtue of that, may I be born as the virtuous daughter of a righteous man and not from a human womb.'

[28–31] “When she had spoken in this fashion, she entered the blazing fire, the eater of oblations. Then, on every side, there fell from the heavens a heavenly shower of blossoms. That foe, who had previously been doomed by her in her wrath, has now been slain by you, who have taken recourse to your mountainous and superhuman strength. And thus, this illustrious woman has been born once again among men in a field torn up by a ploughshare, where she looked like a flame of fire on a sacrificial altar. And thus, the woman called Vedavatī, who lived long ago in the Kṛta Yuga, has appeared in the Tretā Yuga to accomplish the destruction of that *rākṣasa*. Since she was born from a furrow [*sītā*], men always call her Sītā.”

Sarga 18

[1–3] “After Vedavatī had entered the fire, eater of oblations, Rāvaṇa mounted the flying palace Puṣpaka and roamed the earth. Then, arriving at the country of Uśīrabīja, the *rākṣasa* spied King Marutta, who was offering a sacrifice together with the gods. The brahman-seer Saṃvarta by name, the brother of Bṛhaspati himself and a knower of righteousness, officiated at the sacrifice, surrounded by all the hosts of brahmans.

[4–5] “But when the gods saw that *rākṣasa*, invincible through the gift of his boon, they betook themselves to the wombs of various creatures, terrified that he would attack them. Indra became a peacock; Yama, the king of righteousness, a crow; while the lord of wealth became a lizard; and Varuṇa, a *haṃsa*.

[6–9] “Approaching the king, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, said, ‘You must either offer me battle or acknowledge defeat.’ Then King Marutta said to him, ‘And who, sir, are you?’ But the *rākṣasa* laughed derisively and said these words: ‘I am amused by how unimpressed you are, your majesty, in that you do not seem to grasp that I am Rāvaṇa, the younger brother of Kubera, the bestower of wealth. For who in the three worlds does not know my strength, whereby I defeated my brother and seized this flying palace?’

[10–12] “Then King Marutta said this to the *rākṣasa*: ‘What a splendid fellow you are, sir, to have defeated your own elder brother in battle. That which is inconsistent with righteousness is not praiseworthy, nor is that which goes against proper conduct. After having carried out this depraved act, you now boast about defeating your brother. Did you perform some perfect act of righteousness in the past, such that you received a boon? The

sort of thing you yourself boast of is something I have never heard of before.’

[13–18] “Then the king, seizing his bow and arrows in a rage, set out for battle. But Saṃvarta blocked his path. The great seer spoke affectionately to Marutta: ‘If you want my advice, battle is not appropriate for you. If left incomplete, this sacrifice dedicated to Maheśvara would consume your dynasty. And how can one who is consecrated for sacrifice engage in battle? How can there be violence on the part of one so consecrated? Moreover, battle is always uncertain and this *rākṣasa* is invincible.’ And so, withdrawing on the advice of his *guru*, Marutta, lord of the earth, put aside his bow and arrows and, fully composed, turned his attention to the sacrifice. Then, regarding him as vanquished, Śuka proclaimed: ‘Rāvaṇa is victorious!’ and he roared with delight. Rāvaṇa then devoured the great seers who had assembled there for the sacrifice and, sated with their blood, once more began to roam the earth.

[19–22] “Once Rāvaṇa had gone, the gods, denizens of heaven, along with Indra, resumed their natural forms and addressed those creatures whose forms they had taken. In his delight Indra then addressed the peacock with its indigo tail feathers: ‘I am pleased with your assistance, O sky-going bird who knows righteousness. The thousand eyes that I possess shall appear upon your tail, and, as a token of my gratitude, you shall experience delight whenever I send my rains.’ And so, lord of kings, they say that formerly the tails of peacocks were solid indigo, but after receiving that boon from the lord of the gods, they all became variegated.

[23–26] “Then, Rāma, King Dharma addressed that crow, which now was perched on the beam of the eastern sacrificial hall: ‘O bird, I am pleased with you. Now hear my words of gratitude. Since I am pleased, those various ailments with which I afflict other creatures shall have no power over you. Of this there can be no doubt. Through my boon, O sky-going bird, you shall have no fear of death. Indeed, so long as men do not kill you, you shall live forever. And when you are fed, those men who reside in my realm and are afflicted by hunger will be sated together with their kinsmen.’

[27–30] “Next Varuṇa addressed the *haṃsa*, who frequents the waters of the Ganges: ‘O lord of winged creatures, hear my grateful words. Your color will be ravishing, bright, like the orb of the moon, excellent, and equal

in luster to shining foam. In contact with the water, my particular domain, you shall always be beautiful, and you shall obtain unequaled delight as a token of my gratitude.’ Formerly, Rāma, the color of *haṃsas* was not pure white. Their wings had dark tips, while their breasts were as bright as the tips of new grass.

[31–32] “Then Vaiśravaṇa addressed that lizard, which now sat on a hill: ‘As I am pleased with you, I shall grant you a golden color. Your head shall be immutably golden forever. This golden hue will be yours through my gratitude.’

[33] “When the sacrificial ceremony was completed, the gods, having granted these boons to those creatures, returned to their respective abodes together with the king.”

Sarga 19

[1–5] “Having thus defeated Marutta, the ten-faced lord of the *rākṣasas*, spoiling for battle, proceeded to the capitals of other kings. Accosting those lords among kings, the equals of great Indra and Varuṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas* said: ‘You must either give me battle or declare yourselves vanquished! This is my resolve. There will be no escape for those of you who act otherwise.’ Then those many wise kings who were resolved upon righteousness, recognizing that their enemy’s might derived from a boon, declared, ‘We are vanquished!’ Then, Rāma my son, all those kings—Duṣyanta, Suratha, Gādhi, Gaya, and King Purūravas—declared, ‘We are vanquished.’

[6–8] “At length Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, came to Ayodhyā, which was as carefully guarded by Anaraṇya as is Amarāvatī by Śakra, and, accosting that king, he said: ‘Give me battle or declare yourself vanquished. Such is my command.’ In a towering rage, Anaraṇya said to the lord of the *rākṣasas*, ‘I grant you single combat, O lord of the *rākṣasas*.’

[9–11] “Then the vast army of the lord of men, which he had made ready after hearing of those earlier conquests, marched forth intent on slaughtering the *rākṣasas*. At once many thousands of elephants and ten thousand cavalry marched forth, along with infantry and chariots, covering the earth. When the king’s army encountered that of Rāvaṇa, it was consumed, your majesty, like an oblation offered in the sacrificial fire.

[12–15] “The lord of men watched as his vast army was being annihilated, like the waters of the five rivers when they merge with the mighty ocean. And, beside himself with rage, the lord of men, twanging his bow, which was like the bow of mighty Indra, assailed Rāvaṇa on his own. Then the delight of the House of Ikṣvāku rained down eight hundred arrows on the *rākṣasa* king’s head. But, like showers of rain falling from the clouds on a mountain summit, his arrows, in falling, produced no injury whatsoever.

[16–19] “But then, with the palm of his hand, the enraged king of the *rākṣasas* struck King Anaraṇya on his head so that he fell from his chariot. Fallen to the ground, the king, trembling, his limbs twitching, resembled a mighty *sāla* tree struck down in the forest by a thunderbolt. Mocking the Ikṣvāku king, the *rākṣasa* said: ‘Now what benefit have you reaped in doing battle with me? For there is no one in the triple world who can offer me single combat, lord of men. I guess you have not heard of my might as you were addicted to sensual pleasures.’

[20–24] “As Rāvaṇa was speaking in this fashion, the king, his life breaths ebbing, said these words: ‘Since fate is insuperable, what could I have done here? For it is not you who have defeated me, *rākṣasa*, although you boast about it. It is by fate that I have been slain here. You, sir, have merely been its instrument in my case. But what I can do now—as my life breaths ebb away—is utter a prophecy, *rākṣasa*, since you have insulted the House of Ikṣvāku. If I have given charitably, if I have performed sacrifices, if I have properly engaged in penances, and if I have duly protected my people, then may this prophecy of mine prove true: In this House of the great Ikṣvākus, there shall be born a king of immense blazing energy who shall rob you of your life.’

[25–26] “No sooner had this curse been uttered than the war drum of the gods, loud as a thundercloud, was beaten, and a shower of blossoms fell from the sky. Then, O lord of kings, the king ascended to his heavenly abode. And once the king had gone to heaven, Rāma, the *rākṣasa* departed.”

Sarga 20

[1–2] [a]“Then, as the lord of the *rākṣasas* continued terrorizing the people of the earth, he encountered Nārada, foremost of sages, in a forest. Perched on

the back of a cloud, the divine seer Nārada of immense blazing energy and immeasurable splendor addressed Rāvaṇa, who was mounted on the flying palace Puṣpaka:

[3–5] " 'My good sir, lord of the *rākṣasas*, stay a moment. Son of Viśravas, endowed with noble birth, I am pleased with your glorious feats of valor. I have been greatly pleased with Viṣṇu's slaughter of the *daityas*, Tārkṣya's defeat of the great serpents, and your crushing blows in battle. Now I will tell you something that you should hear, if you will listen. And once you have heard it, bull among *rākṣasas*, you should then act upon it.

[6–10] " 'Why do you, who are invulnerable to the gods, go on killing mere mortals? For being under the power of death, these mortals have already been slain. Just look at this world of mortals, great-armed lord of the *rākṣasas*, filled with innumerable cross-purposes and totally unaware of its own fate. In one place joyous people are playing music and dancing, while others, tormented, are weeping, their faces marked by eyes flooded with tears. With their affection for their mothers, fathers, and sons, and delighting in their wives and friends, the people, in their infatuation, are lost and fail to grasp their own misery. So why go on tormenting the world in this fashion since it has already been destroyed by delusion? For you have already completely subjugated the world of mortals, good sir. Of this there is no doubt.'

[11–13] "Addressed in this fashion, the lord of Laṅkā, blazing, as it were, with splendor, respectfully saluted Nārada and, smiling, said to him regarding that: 'Great seer, you who take your pleasure among the gods and *gandharvas* and are so fond of battle, I am indeed preparing to go to the underworld known as Rasātala in search of victory. Then, once I have subjugated the three worlds and brought the great serpents and gods under my control, I shall churn the ocean, the receptacle of every essence, for the nectar of immortality.'

[14–15] "But the holy seer Nārada said to ten-necked Rāvaṇa: 'So where then are you going now by this path? For, tormentor of your foes, this path, difficult and impassable, leads to the city of Yama, the king of the ancestors.'

[16–19] "Bursting out with a laugh like an autumnal cloud, ten-faced Rāvaṇa replied, 'I have already accomplished this!' Then he spoke these words: 'Therefore, great brahman, resolved as I am to slay Vaivasvata, I

shall proceed to the south, where that king, the son of Sūrya, dwells. Eager for battle, O blessed lord, I vowed in my fury: "I shall conquer the four guardians of the world!" Therefore, I shall set out for the city of the king of the ancestors and I shall put that tormentor of living beings to death.'

[20–25] "When ten-necked Rāvaṇa had spoken in this fashion, he respectfully saluted the sage and set out for the southern region, accompanied by his excited counselors. But that foremost of brahmans, who was of immense blazing energy and resembled a smokeless fire, the purifier, remained lost in thought for a while and reflected: 'It is Kāla who afflicts the three worlds with their fixed and moving contents, including Indra, when their lives and merit are at an end. How can he himself be slain? How can the lord of the *rākṣasas* of his own free will approach him from whom the three worlds always flee, afflicted with terror? How can he who is the creator and who apportions the fruits of good and evil deeds, he by whom the triple world was conquered, be vanquished? And what other means will he devise to accomplish this? Having become quite curious, I too shall proceed to Yama's abode.' "

Sarga 21

[1–3] "When Nārada, the foremost of brahmans, had reflected in this fashion, he went swiftly to Yama's abode in order to report what had transpired. There he saw the god Yama, who, attended by Agni, was dealing out appropriate fates to living beings. When Yama saw that the great seer Nārada had arrived, he offered him, in keeping with righteousness, a comfortable seat and the guest-offering. He then said:

[4–7] " 'I trust that all is well, divine seer, and I trust that righteousness has not been violated. What, O you upon whom the gods and the *gandharvas* attend, is the purpose of your coming?' Then the holy seer Nārada spoke these words: 'Listen! I will tell you. Then you must take the necessary steps. O king of the ancestors, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* known as ten-necked Rāvaṇa is coming here in order to subjugate—through his valor—you, who are impossible to vanquish. It is for this reason that I have come in haste, lord. What can he do this day to you whose weapon is the rod?'

[8–11] "At that very moment, Nārada spied the divine flying palace of the *rākṣasa* approaching from afar. It resembled the rising, many-rayed sun.

The immensely powerful *rākṣasa* drew near, dispelling the darkness of the whole region through the radiance of the Puṣpaka. On every side, the great-armed, ten-necked Rāvaṇa saw living beings experiencing the consequences of their good and evil deeds. Then, through his valor, mighty Rāvaṇa forcibly freed those who were being tormented because of their own evil deeds.

[12–15] "As the departed spirits were being liberated by the immensely powerful *rākṣasa*, their guards were enraged and attacked the lord of the *rākṣasas*. In their hundreds of thousands, those heroes sent a hail of darts, iron beams, lances, war hammers, javelins, and iron cudgels against the Puṣpaka. Swarming like bees, they swiftly battered the seats, terraces, raised platforms, and gateways of the Puṣpaka. But since the Puṣpaka flying palace was an abode of divinity, it remained indestructible through the blazing splendor of Brahmā, even as it was being battered in battle.

[16–19] "Then Rāvaṇa's mighty counselors fought with all their will and all their strength, as did the ten-faced king himself. Their bodies smeared with blood, wounded by every sort of weapon, the counselors of the *rākṣasa* lord fought a great battle. And those illustrious warriors—Yama's great host and the *rākṣasa*'s counselors—struck at one another with their weapons in battle. But turning away from the *rākṣasa*'s counselors, those exceedingly mighty warriors assailed ten-faced Rāvaṇa himself with a hail of lances.

[20–23] "Then, grievously wounded with weapons, his body smeared with blood, the foremost of the *rākṣasas* in his flying palace resembled an *aśoka* tree in bloom. However, as he was a master of divine weapon-spells, that mighty warrior released lances, maces, darts, javelins, iron cudgels, arrows, cudgels, boulders, and trees. But having repulsed them all and rendered futile his divine weapon-spell, they, in their hundreds and thousands, belabored the fearsome *rākṣasa*, who was alone. They all surrounded him as a mass of clouds might a mountain, and, with their short javelins and lances, they knocked the wind out of him.

[24–27] "Drenched with gouts of blood, his armor gone, he left the Puṣpaka in a rage and took his stand on the ground. Then, after a moment, the enraged overlord of the *rākṣasas* cleared his mind and, armed with his bow and arrows, took up his stand on the ground like Yama, the ender of all things. Nocking to his bow an arrow charged with the divine weapon-spell

of Paśupati, he drew that bow, crying out to them, ‘Stand! Stand!’ Garlanded with flames and followed by flesh-eating beasts, that arrow, released in battle, sped along, reducing thickets and trees to ashes.

[28–29] “Consumed by its blazing energy, the warriors of Vaivasvata fell in battle, like trees consumed by a forest fire. Then, together with his ministers, that *rākṣasa* of fearsome valor roared a mighty roar causing the earth to tremble, as it were.”

Sarga 22

[1–3] “Now, when Yama Vaivasvata heard ten-necked Rāvaṇa’s mighty roar, he realized that his enemy had been victorious and that his own army had been destroyed. Realizing that his warriors had been slain, his eyes wild with rage, he quickly said to his charioteer, ‘Bring up my chariot.’ His charioteer then brought up his divine, loudly rumbling chariot. Then he of immense blazing energy mounted that great chariot and took his stand.

[4–6] “Standing before him, wielding a noose and a war hammer, was Mṛtyu, who destroys the entire triple world with its fixed and moving contents. And beside him in the chariot stood Yama’s divine weapon, the rod of Kāla, in human form, glowing, as it were, with its blazing energy. Then the three worlds and the gods, denizens of heaven, seeing that Kāla, the terror of the three worlds, was enraged, were afraid and trembled.

[7–8] “And when the ministers of that foremost of *rākṣasas* saw that fearsome chariot—terrifying to all the worlds—with Mṛtyu mounted upon it, they were stricken with fear. Their minds reeling because of their inferior strength, they cried, ‘We are unable to fight here!’ And they all fled.

[9–13] “But even when the *rākṣasa* saw such a chariot, a terror to the worlds, he was not disturbed, nor did he suffer any anxiety. Now, having confronted Rāvaṇa, Yama, in a towering rage, hurled javelins and war hammers, piercing the *rākṣasa*’s vital points. But Rāvaṇa remained uninjured and unleashed a hail of arrows on Vaivasvata’s chariot, as might a storm cloud a torrent of rain. Then, because of the hundreds of huge javelins that cascaded down upon his great chest, the *rākṣasa*, afflicted by those sharp weapons, was unable to retaliate. Although Yama, the tormentor of his foes, gave battle in this fashion with all manner of weapons for seven nights, Rāvaṇa was neither broken nor vanquished.

[14–16] “Then there broke out a renewed battle between Yama and the *rākṣasa*, both eager for victory and never turning back in battle. The gods, along with the *gandharvas*, the perfected beings, and the supreme seers, placing Prajāpati at their head, gazed upon that battlefield. While those two —the chief of the *rākṣasas* and the lord of the departed—were engaged in battle, it was like the dissolution of the universe.

[17–19] “Then the lord of the *rākṣasas*, enraged, drew his bow in battle and released arrows, seeming to fill the sky with them. He wounded Mṛtyu with four arrows and the charioteer with seven. Then he swiftly struck Yama in his vital points with a thousand arrows. But suddenly there issued forth from the mouth of the enraged Yama an exhalation wreathed in flames, a veritable fire of wrath.

[20–25] “Then the gods, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas* witnessed a miraculous thing: that blazing fire born of Yama’s wrath that was eager to burn up the army of his foe. Now Mṛtyu, in a towering rage, addressed Vaivasvata: ‘Give me leave at once, lord, and I will slay your enemy in battle. Naraka, Śambara, Vṛtra, Śambhu, the mighty Kārtasvara, Namuci, Virocana, and the pair Madhu and Kaiṭabha—all these and many other mighty and unassailable heroes—were slain the moment I saw them, so why worry about this night-roaming *rākṣasa*? Give me leave straightaway, knower of righteousness, so that I may kill him. For no one upon whom I gaze can survive even for an instant. Nor is this any power of mine. Rather, it is the law fixed by nature. For no one touched by me can survive, that is certain.’

[26–30] “When the valorous king of righteousness heard these words, he said to Mṛtyu, ‘I will kill him myself.’ Then, his eyes reddened, the enraged lord Vaivasvata hefted the unfailing rod of Kāla. On every side of it, standing crowded closely together, were the nooses of Kāla. And standing there too, in human form, was his war hammer, the very touch of which was like fire, the purifier. Merely upon being seen, that rod cuts off the lives of living beings. How much more so would it take the lives of embodied beings through a blow or through its crushing weight? Touched by the hand of that mighty divinity, that angry and very fearsome rod was wreathed in flames, as if to consume the night-roaming *rākṣasa*.

[31–38] “Then all creatures fled the battlefield, while the gods, seeing Yama with the upraised rod of Kāla, became agitated. But just as Yama, eager to strike Rāvaṇa, raised his rod, Grandfather Brahmā himself

appeared to him and said: 'O great-armed Vaivasvata, you of incomparable valor! You must not strike this night-roaming *rākṣasa* with your rod. For I gave him a boon, O bull among the thirty gods. You must not falsify the words that I have spoken. And it was I who long ago created this rod of Kāla to be unfailing in the destruction of all creatures and in whose wake Mṛtyu follows. Therefore, gentle sir, you must not let it fall upon the *rākṣasa*'s head. For once it falls, no one can survive for even an instant. For once it falls, whether the *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa lives or dies, still in either case, there would be a falsehood. Therefore, you must now hold back from that lord of the *rākṣasas* this rod, held high for destruction. Have some regard for the worlds and make my words truthful.'

[39–41] "When righteous Yama had been addressed in this fashion, he replied: 'The rod has been withdrawn, for you are our sovereign lord. But now what can I do here on the battlefield since I am unable to kill this *rākṣasa*, so arrogant by virtue of his boon? Therefore, I shall vanish from the sight of this *rākṣasa*.' Having spoken in this fashion, he disappeared on the spot, along with his chariot and horses.

[42–43] "Having vanquished Yama, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, in great delight, loudly proclaimed his own name and then, in the Puṣpaka, departed from Yama's abode. Then, delighted, Vaivasvata, together with the gods headed by Brahmā, went to the highest heaven as did the great sage Nārada."

Sarga 23

[1–3] "Next, boastful of his victory after vanquishing Yama—the bull among the thirty gods—ten-faced Rāvaṇa spied his companions. Praising him with shouts of victory, Mārīca and the others all entered the Puṣpaka, where they were reassured by Rāvaṇa. Then, in delight, he proceeded toward Rasātala and plunged into the repository of water, the ocean, which was inhabited by *daityas* and great serpents and was protected by Varuṇa.

[4–7] "Moving on to the city of Bhogavatī, ruled by Vāsuki, he brought the great serpents under his power and, establishing them there, then proceeded to the city of Maṇimatī. The Nivātakavaca *daityas*, who had obtained a boon, dwelt there. Encountering them, the *rākṣasa* challenged them to battle. Those sons of Diti there were all very valorous, endowed with strength and equipped with all kinds of weapons. They were intoxicated with battle and fought fiercely. While they were fighting, a full

year went by, and yet in that time neither side was either victorious or vanquished.

[8–11] “Then the imperishable god, Grandfather Brahmā, the highest recourse of the triple world, came in haste, mounted on his splendid vehicle. Calling a halt to the fighting on the part of the Nivātakavacas, the eternal Grandfather Brahmā spoke these words unambiguously: ‘Surely it is impossible for the gods and *asuras* to defeat Rāvaṇa in battle. Nor is it possible for the gods and *asuras*, together with Indra, to vanquish you gentlemen. An alliance between you and the *rākṣasa* would find favor with me. For all good things are shared equally among friends, of this there is no doubt.’

[12–15] “And so then and there Rāvaṇa concluded an alliance—witnessed by Agni—with the Nivātakavacas. And he was greatly pleased. Duly honored by them, ten-faced Rāvaṇa dwelt there happily for a year, and he received as much homage as he did in his own city. And with a disciplined mind, he acquired the ninety-nine powers of illusion. Then he wandered throughout Rasātala in search of the city of Varuṇa, lord of the waters. Then, having in a short time conquered the city called Aśmanagara, which was protected by the Kālakeyas, he slew four hundred *daityas*.

[16–19] “At length the lord of the *rākṣasas* spied the heavenly abode of Varuṇa. It resembled a white cloud and was established as firmly as Mount Kailāsa. And he saw standing there the cow Surabhi, who was constantly pouring forth milk and from whose flow of milk the ocean called the Ocean of Milk comes into being. It is out of that ocean that the cool-rayed moon, beneficial to all creatures, arises and resorting to which the supreme seers subsist by drinking its foam. It is there that the nectar of immortality was produced, as well as the wine of the gods, those drinkers of wine. And when Rāvaṇa had reverently circumambulated that supremely wonderful cow, whom people in the world refer to by the name Surabhi, he entered that extremely formidable city guarded by troops of many kinds.

[20–22] “There he spied the eternally happy and most excellent abode of Varuṇa, which was filled with hundreds of rushing streams and resembled an autumnal cloud. Belabored by the leaders of the troops, he then struck them down in battle and said: ‘Where has your king gone? Immediately announce to him: “Rāvaṇa has come seeking battle. Please offer combat to

him.” Otherwise, with your hands cupped in reverence, you must declare, “I am vanquished,” and you shall then have nothing to fear.’

[23–26] “At that moment, the enraged sons and grandsons of great Varuṇa marched forth as did Go and Puṣkara. Endowed with might and with every virtue and surrounded by their own troops, they yoked their chariots, which were steered by their owners’ will and the radiance of which was like that of the rising sun, bringer of light. Then there took place a terrifying and hair-raising battle between the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇa and the sons of the lord of the waters. But the immensely powerful ministers of the *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa instantly cut down that entire army of Varuṇa.

[27–30] “When Varuṇa’s sons saw their own forces cut down, they withdrew from combat, harried by a hail of arrows. They had been on the ground, but when they spied Rāvaṇa in the Puṣpaka, they quickly flew up into the sky on their swift-moving chariots. Now that they had reached the same elevation, there broke out between them a great and tumultuous aerial battle like that between the gods and the *dānavas*. Then, with arrows like purifying fire, they forced Rāvaṇa to turn his back in battle, and, in great delight, they roared out various shouts of victory.

[31–33] “Seeing the king assaulted, the heroic Mahodara was furious, and, abandoning all fear of death, he glanced about him, eager for battle. With his mace Mahodara struck down their horses—as swift as the wind and steered by their owners’ will—so that they crashed to the ground. When he had struck down the soldiers and horses of Varuṇa’s sons, he quickly released a loud roar upon seeing them stripped of their chariots.

[34–36] “Struck down by Mahodara, their chariots and horses, together with their excellent charioteers, fell to the surface of the earth. But although they were bereft of their chariots, the heroic sons of great Varuṇa were not shaken, and, through their innate power, they remained in the sky. Stringing their bows and piercing Mahodara, they all together charged at Rāvaṇa in their rage.

[37–41] “Then, enraged, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, standing there like the fire of universal destruction, let fall upon their vital spots an immensely powerful hail of arrows. Standing firm and unassailable, he sent crashing down upon them various kinds of clubs, hundreds of crescent-headed arrows, spears, javelins, hundred-slayers, and iron cudgels as well. Then, wounded, the heroic foot soldiers fled. Releasing a mighty roar, the *rākṣasa*

battered the sons of Varuṇa with all kinds of fearsome weapons, as might a thundercloud with torrents of rain. Then, turning away, they all fell to the ground, and their attendants quickly took them from the battlefield to their homes.

[42–44] “The *rākṣasa* then told them, ‘Let Varuṇa be informed.’ And Varuṇa’s counselor, Prabhāsa by name, said to Rāvaṇa: ‘The lord of the waters, Varuṇa of immense blazing energy, whom you are challenging to battle, has gone to Brahmā’s world to hear a musical recital. Therefore, hero, since the king is away, why do you exhaust yourself to no purpose? You have already defeated the heroic princes who are here.’

[45–46] “When he heard this, the lord of the *rākṣasas* loudly proclaimed his own name. Releasing a roar in his delight, he set forth from Varuṇa’s realm. Returning by the path on which he had come, the *rākṣasa*, rising into the sky, turned his face toward Lañkā and proceeded on his way.”

[Interpolated Passage I follows *sarga* 23; see PVR 7: 1285–1304]

Sarga 24

[1–3] “As he was returning, evil-minded Rāvaṇa, in great delight, abducted along the way the daughters of kings, seers, gods, and *gandharvas*. After killing her kinsmen, the *rākṣasa* forced any beautiful woman he saw, married or unmarried, to enter his flying palace. And so, along the way, Rāvaṇa seized the daughters of the great serpents, *yakṣas*, men, *rākṣasas*, *daityas*, and *dānavas*.

[4–6] “They had long tresses and exquisite limbs, and their faces were like the full moon. All of those young women, bent down by the weight of their breasts, were overwhelmed with grief. Trembling and afflicted with sorrow, they shed copious tears, which, born of fear and the fire of grief, were like flames of fire. Inflamed by the sighs of those sighing women, the Puṣpaka resembled a sacrificial firepit with a fire contained within it.

[7–12] “One of them, deeply afflicted with sorrow, brooded, ‘Is he going to kill me?’ Utterly overwhelmed with grief and sorrow, all of those women lamented together when they remembered their mothers, fathers, brothers, sons, and fathers-in-law: ‘Oh, what will my son do without me, what of my mother, what of my brother, all of them drowning in a sea of grief? Alas, what shall I do without my husband, who is a god to me? Be merciful, Mṛtyu, I beg you. Carry me away to the abode of Yama. What evil deed

must I have done long ago in another birth, such that I have been assaulted by him and have fallen into a sea of grief? Indeed, now I cannot see any end to this sorrow of mine in this world. How pathetic are men! Indeed, nothing is more abject, since my feeble kinsmen were obliterated by mighty Rāvaṇa as are the stars by the risen sun.

[13–15] " 'Oh! This immensely powerful *rākṣasa* delights in the ways of slaughter. Alas, he does not realize himself what an evil nature he has. By all means, the valor of this evil-minded creature is quite appropriate. But the act that is unbecoming to him is the molestation of other men's wives. Since this evil-minded Rāvaṇa is enamored of women who belong to others, he shall therefore meet his death on account of a woman.'

[16–17] "Then, after he was cursed by those virtuous women, who were devoted to their husbands and who were firmly fixed on the path of virtue, he was drained of his blazing energy and robbed of his luster. As the women continued to lament in this fashion, Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, being honored by the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, entered the city of Laṅkā.

[18–19] "Then the sister of the *rākṣasa* king, in great sorrow, threw herself at his feet and began to speak. Raising up his sister and consoling her, Rāvaṇa said, 'What is this, auspicious lady? Please tell me quickly.'

[20–24] "Her eyes occluded with tears, the *rākṣasa* woman spoke these words: 'I am ruined! For you, in your might, have made me a widow, your majesty. Your majesty, you, in your might, slaughtered in battle those *daityas* of immense strength and valor known as the Kālakeyas. And in that battle my beloved husband, dearer to me than life itself, was slain by you, a brother no different than an enemy. Since, your majesty, I have been ruined by you yourself, who are my kinsman, I shall now have to endure the painful epithet "widow," which you have inflicted upon me. Should not your son-in-law, surely, have been protected by you even in battle? Yet, having slain him in battle yourself, your majesty, you feel no sense of shame.'

[25–27] "Addressed in this fashion by his wailing sister, the *rākṣasa* comforted her and spoke these conciliatory words: 'Enough of this despondency, dear child! You shall have nothing to fear in any way. For I shall always gratify you with special honors and gifts. Intoxicated in battle and distracted, I was shooting arrows in my desire for victory, so I did not,

lovely lady, distinguish in battle my friends from my enemies. And it is thus, sister, that I slew your husband in battle.

[28–32] " 'Whatever beneficial thing might be accomplished at this time, I will do for you. You should stay with our brother Khara, who lives in lordly splendor. And your brother will be the lord of fourteen thousand immensely powerful *rākṣasas*, commanding and supporting them. There your brother, Lord Khara, the son of your mother's sister, will always dwell, carrying out whatever words you yourself shall utter. So let that hero go quickly to protect the Daṇḍakas. Immensely powerful Dūṣaṇa shall be the chief of his army. For that forest tract was cursed long ago by the enraged Uśanas, who said, "This shall be the dwelling place of *rākṣasas*, without a doubt." '

[33–35] "When ten-necked Rāvaṇa had spoken in this fashion, he assigned to him an army of fourteen thousand *rākṣasas*, who could take on any form at will. And so, surrounded by all of those fearsome-looking *rākṣasas*, the utterly fearless Khara proceeded swiftly to the Daṇḍakas. And there he ruled a kingdom in which all obstacles had been eliminated. And Śūrpaṇakhā too, delighted, dwelt in the Daṇḍaka forest."

Sarga 25

[1–4] "When ten-necked Rāvaṇa had granted that fearsome forest to Khara and had consoled his sister, he was delighted and greatly satisfied. Then, together with his retinue, the great lord of the *rākṣasas* entered Laṅkā's vast woodland known as Nikumbhilā. There he saw that a sacrifice was taking place, blazing, as it were, with splendor. It was replete with hundreds of sacrificial posts and was made more beautiful by the presence of a splendid shrine. And then he saw there, wearing a black antelope skin and bearing the waterpot, tuft, and staff of an ascetic, his own son Meghanāda, the tamer of his foes.

[5–6] "Approaching, the lord of the *rākṣasas* embraced him with his arms and said, 'What is this that is taking place, my child? Tell me that.' But on that occasion, it was that foremost of brahmans, their *guru* Uśanas of great austerities who, for the success of the sacrifice, addressed Rāvaṇa, the foremost of *rākṣasas*:

[7–13] " 'I shall tell you everything, your majesty. Please listen. Your son has completed seven extremely elaborate sacrifices. They were the

agniṣṭoma, the *aśvamedha*, and the sacrifice called *bahusuvarṇaka*, as well as the *rājasūya* sacrifice, the *gomedha*, and the *vaiṣṇava*. And when the *māheśvara* sacrifice, so difficult for men to perform, was completed, your son received here boons from Paśupati himself. These were a heavenly and virtually indestructible chariot that moved at its owner's will and could travel through the sky and the power of illusion called the *tāmasī*, which creates darkness. It is said that by means of this power of illusion, O lord of the *rākṣasas*, it is impossible for even the gods or the *asuras* to discern a warrior's movements in battle. And, dear boy, he also received two inexhaustible quivers, along with arrows and an invincible bow, as well as a mighty, divine weapon-spell that annihilates one's enemies in battle. Now, at the conclusion of the sacrifice, having received these boons, ten-faced Rāvaṇa, this son of yours, is expecting you, as am I.'

[14–15] "Then ten-necked Rāvaṇa said: 'This was not well done, since our enemies, headed by Indra, have been worshiped with material gifts. But come now, for it is impossible to undo what has already been done. So come, dear boy, let us go back to our own home.'

[16–20] "Then, when ten-necked Rāvaṇa had returned with his son and Vibhīṣaṇa, he made all those women, who were overwhelmed with tears, descend from the Puṣpaka. They were the foremost women of the gods, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas*. They were endowed with every auspicious mark. They were adorned with all kinds of ornaments, and they shone with their own blazing splendor. Now, when righteous Vibhīṣaṇa saw those women, who were overwhelmed with grief, and realized his brother's intentions toward them, he spoke these words: 'In assaulting living beings with such behavior that is so destructive to your reputation, your interests, and your clan, you are behaving willfully. In fact, while you were carrying off these splendid women, after having assaulted their kinsmen, your majesty, Madhu has transgressed against you and carried off Kumbhīnasī.'

[21–25] "Then Rāvaṇa spoke these words: 'I don't understand. What is this? And who is this person called Madhu that you mentioned?' And Vibhīṣaṇa, greatly angered, said these words to his brother: 'Now listen to the fruit of this evil action, which has now come to pass. The elder brother of our maternal great-uncle Sumālin is the wise and elderly night-roaming *rākṣasa* known as Mālyavān. And he is our mother's father's elder and so our venerable grandfather. The daughter of his daughter is called

Kumbhīnasī. And that daughter born of our maternal aunt Analā is, according to proper custom, the sister of us brothers.

[26–28] " 'It is she whom the immensely powerful *rākṣasa* Madhu carried off, your majesty, while your son was performing his sacrifices and I was dwelling underwater. Striking down the foremost of the *rākṣasas* and assaulting your respected ministers, your majesty, he carried her off, although she was guarded in your inner apartments. Still, although we came to know of this, great king, we let it pass, and he was not killed, since a maiden must, of necessity, be given away to a husband by those who are authorized to do so. And, as you must realize, you have now suffered the consequences in this very world.'

[29–32] "Then ten-necked Rāvaṇa, his eyes reddened in his rage, said: 'Get my chariot ready at once, and let my heroic warriors prepare themselves. And let my brother Kumbhakarṇa and those who are foremost among the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, armed with all kinds of weapons, mount their vehicles. This very day I shall first kill in battle this Madhu, who has no fear of Rāvaṇa, and then, surrounded by my companions and eager for battle, I shall proceed to Indra's world. Once I have conquered the highest heaven and subjugated Indra, smasher of citadels, then, contented and adorned with the lordship of the triple world, I shall enjoy myself.'

[33–37] "At once, four thousand fearsome armies of *rākṣasas* marched forth bearing all kinds of weapons and eager for battle. Taking command of the troops, Indrajit went ahead of the army. Valorous Rāvaṇa was in the middle, while Kumbhakarṇa brought up the rear. But as for righteous Vibhīṣaṇa, he practiced righteousness in Laṅkā, while all those illustrious warriors marched off to Madhu's city. Filling the entire sky, all the *rākṣasas* went forth mounted on chariots, elephants, donkeys, camels, horses, and great fiery serpents. Seeing Rāvaṇa advancing, the *daityas*, who cherished enmity for the gods, followed behind him in their hundreds.

[38–42] "Once ten-faced Rāvaṇa reached Madhu's city, he entered it. He saw his sister there, but not Madhu. Terrified of the king of the *rākṣasas*, his sister Kumbhīnasī humbly cupped her hands in reverence and bowed her head down to his feet. Raising her up and saying, 'You have nothing to fear,' Rāvaṇa, foremost of the *rākṣasas*, said, 'What may I do for you?' She said: 'If you are kindly disposed toward me, immensely powerful king, then please do not kill my husband today, bestower of honor. Great-armed

warrior, you yourself said, “You have nothing to fear.” Now be true to your word. Foremost of kings, please have some consideration for me, I am begging you.’

[43–47] “Delighted, Rāvaṇa said to his sister, who stood there: ‘Where, indeed, is your husband? Please inform me at once. Together with him I shall surely go on to the world of the gods for victory. Because of my compassion and affection for you, I shall not kill Madhu.’ Addressed in this fashion, the *rākṣasa* woman, as if transported with joy, roused her extremely wise husband, the night-roaming *rākṣasa*, who had been sleeping, and said: ‘My brother, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa, eager to conquer the world of the gods, has chosen you to assist him. You must go to assist him, *rākṣasa*, together with your kinsmen. For it is only proper to accomplish the purpose of one who is affectionate and devoted.’

[48–50] “When he had heard these words of hers, Madhu uttered the words, ‘So be it!’ He then received the foremost of the *rākṣasas* with all due courtesy. He honored Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, in keeping with righteousness. Having received this honor, the mighty ten-necked Rāvaṇa spent the night there in Madhu’s abode and then prepared to depart. When the lord of the *rākṣasas*, who resembled great Indra, had reached Mount Kailāsa, the abode of Vaiśravaṇa, he had his army make camp.”

Sarga 26

[1–4] “As the sun, maker of day, had set, mighty ten-necked Rāvaṇa chose to camp there with his army. And when the bright moon rose, equal in splendor to the mountain itself, he gazed at the beauty of the scene, now still further enhanced by the moonlight. And it was yet further enhanced by heavenly *karṇikāra* groves, dense thickets of *kadamba*, lotus ponds in blossom, and the waters of the Mandākinī River. And there in the abode of Kubera, the giver of wealth, could be heard, like the sound of bells, the sweet sounds of the troupes of *apsarases* singing.

[5–8] “Shaken by the breeze, the trees, fragrant with the sweetness of their nectar, released showers of blossoms, perfuming, as it were, the mountain. The pleasant breeze, mingled with nectar and the pollen of the blossoms, took on their powerful scent and blew, kindling Rāvaṇa’s desire. As the night wore on, through the singing, the abundance of blossoms, the

coolness of the breeze, and the beauties of the mountain, immensely powerful Rāvaṇa fell under the sway of Kāma's arrows. Sighing again and again, he gazed at the hare-marked moon.

[9–11] "Now at this juncture, Rambhā, the foremost of all the *apsarases*, adorned with heavenly blossoms, her face like the full moon, happened to pass that way. With moist unguents applied as well as fragrant powders made from the flowers of all six seasons, she was draped in a dark blue garment that resembled a rain-charged cloud. As she, whose face was like the hare-marked moon, whose lovely brows were like two bows, whose thighs were as shapely as elephant trunks, and whose hands were as soft as tender sprouts, passed through the army, Rāvaṇa spied her.

[12–19] "Leaping up, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, tormented by the force of Kāma's arrows, seized her hand as she passed by and, smiling, said: 'Where are you going, fair-hipped lady? What consummation of delight will you bestow? Whose moment of good fortune is this in that he is about to enjoy you? Who, this very night, will sate himself on the nectar of your mouth, as fragrant as the red or blue lotus and which is like the very essence of divine nectar? Against whose chest will these breasts, like golden jars, so full, so lovely, and so closely pressed, crush, timid lady? And who will, this night, ascend to that very heaven in the form of your broad hips, which, adorned with golden girdle-strings, resemble a circle of gold? What other person—whether Śakra, Viṣṇu, or the Aśvins—is more distinguished than I so that, on his account, you pass me by? It is not right. So rest here, broad-hipped woman, on this lovely stone surface, for there is no lord in the triple world who is my equal. It is I, ten-faced Rāvaṇa, who humbly entreats you with hands cupped in supplication, and I am the lord and master of the triple world. Please love me.'

[20–22] "Addressed in this fashion, Rambhā, trembling and cupping her hands in supplication, said: 'Be merciful. You ought not speak to me in this fashion, for you are like a father to me. Indeed, you are the one who should protect me, should I be assaulted by others. For by rights, I am your daughter-in-law. This is the truth I am telling you.' But as she stood there with her eyes lowered to her feet, ten-necked Rāvaṇa said to her, 'Only if you were my son's wife would you be my daughter-in-law.'

[23–29] "Rambhā replied to Rāvaṇa: 'It is just so. For by rights, bull among *rākṣasas*, I am the wife of your son. He is the son of your brother

Kubera Vaiśravaṇa and dearer to him than life itself. He is famed throughout the three worlds as Nalakūbara. He is a brahman in respect to righteousness and a kshatriya in respect to valor. He is Agni in his wrath and like the earth itself, bearer of wealth, in forbearance. It is with the son of that world guardian that I have made an assignation. It is for his sake that I have put on all this adornment. For it is he and none other who loves me, your majesty. By the force of that truth you must release me, tamer of your foes. Right now that righteous man awaits, anxiously longing for me. So you ought not create an obstacle for your son here. Release me! You should follow the path trodden by the virtuous, bull among *rākṣasas*. You are to be respected by me, and by the same token, I should be cherished by you.'

[30] "But even as Rambhā was uttering this speech, which was in accord with righteousness and proper conduct, the powerful *rākṣasa*, cutting her off, in his infatuation seized her forcibly, and, inflamed with lust and infatuation, he began to rape her.

[31–33] "Then, once she was released, her garlands and ornaments broken, Rambhā was as disheveled as a river churned up by the sporting of a great bull elephant. Trembling in her shame, terrified, and cupping her hands in supplication, she ran to Nalakūbara and fell at his feet. And when great Nalakūbara saw her in such a state, he said, 'What is this, auspicious lady, that you have fallen at my feet?'

[34–39] "But she, sighing and trembling, with her hands cupped in supplication, then began to tell him everything, just as it had happened. 'My lord, ten-necked Rāvaṇa came here on his way to Indra's heaven, Triviṣṭapa, and he passed the night here together with his army. As I was coming to meet you, tamer of your foes, he spied me. Seizing me, that *rākṣasa* asked, "To whom do you belong?" And although I told him the whole truth, he, his mind overwhelmed with lust and delusion, would not heed my words. My lord, I pleaded with him, saying, "Your majesty, I am your daughter-in-law." But brushing all that aside, he forcibly raped me. Thus, you should please forgive my transgression, gentle bestower of pride. For the strength of a woman is not equal to that of a man.'

[40–44] "Then, when the son of Vaiśravaṇa had heard about this, he was furious. After hearing about that egregious assault, he entered into meditation. Then, when, after a moment, he had confirmed Rāvaṇa's actions, Vaiśravaṇa's son, his eyes red with rage, took water in his hand.

When he had taken that heavenly water and sipped it according to precept, he then pronounced a terrible curse on the lord of the *rākṣasas*: 'Since, auspicious woman, he forcibly assaulted you, who were unwilling, he shall never force himself upon another unwilling young woman again. And if ever, afflicted by lust, he should assault an unwilling woman, then his head shall burst into seven pieces.'

[45–47] "The moment that curse, equal in radiance to a blazing fire, was uttered, the war drums of the gods thundered and a shower of blossoms fell from the sky. When all the gods, headed by Prajāpati, came to know of the overall state of the world and of the impending doom of the *rākṣasa*, they were delighted. But when ten-necked Rāvaṇa heard about that hair-raising curse, he lost his desire to make love to unwilling women."

Sarga 27

[1–4] "Then, passing beyond Mount Kailāsa, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* of immense blazing energy, along with his *rākṣasas*, reached Indra's world. As the *rākṣasa* army approached on every side, its din, like the roar of the ocean being shattered, reached the world of the gods. Upon hearing that Rāvaṇa had come, Indra trembled on his throne. He addressed all the gods who were assembled there—the Ādityas, along with the Vasus, the Rudras, the Viśvas, the *sādhyas*, and the hosts of the Maruts—saying, 'Make ready for battle with evil-minded Rāvaṇa.'

[5–6] "Addressed in this fashion by Śakra, the immensely powerful gods, who were equal to Śakra in battle and confident in combat, girded themselves for battle. But great Indra was dejected, for he was fearful of Rāvaṇa. Approaching Viṣṇu, he spoke these words:

[7–12] " 'O Viṣṇu, you who are endowed with immense power and valor, what shall we do? For this mighty *rākṣasa* has come, seeking battle. He is powerful because of the granting of that boon and for no other reason. But, O God, those words of Prajāpati, must be rendered true. Please do as you did before when, relying upon your counsel, I burned up Namuci, Vṛtra, Bali, Naraka, and Śambara. For, mighty God among gods, you are the Supreme Spirit. There is no one other than you, who is our protector and recourse in times of calamity. You are the eternal and majestic lotus-naveled Nārāyaṇa. And it is you alone who have established me in the everlasting kingship of the gods. Therefore, please tell me, truthfully, god of gods. Will

you, with the aid of your sword and discus, fight the enemy in battle yourself?'

[13–19] "Addressed in this fashion by Śakra, the god, Lord Nārāyaṇa, said: 'You need have no fear. Moreover, listen to me. For the time being, this evil creature, invincible through the gift of his boon, is impossible to kill even if encountered in battle by the gods and the *dānavas*. By all means, this *rākṣasa*, arrogant in his might and assisted by his son, is going to perform mighty feats. I know this through my inherent knowledge. And as for what you asked me, Śakra—"Will you fight him in battle?"—I shall by no means fight Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*. For Viṣṇu never turns back without having killed his enemy. And at this time what you desire with regard to that *rākṣasa* is not feasible, as he has acquired that boon. But standing right before you, O lord of the gods, Indra of the hundred sacrifices, I promise you that I myself shall be the cause of this *rākṣasa*'s death. When I recognize that the time is at hand, I shall kill Rāvaṇa, together with his son, in battle and so gratify the gods.'

[20–21] "At that moment, just at daybreak, a roar was heard on every side coming from Rāvaṇa's army, which always fought fiercely. Then, with a tumultuous din, a fearsome battle involving all sorts of weapons broke out between the gods and the *rākṣasas*.

[22–26] "At this juncture, the heroic *rākṣasa* ministers, fearsome to look upon, ran forward to battle at Rāvaṇa's command. There were Mārīca, Prahasta, Mahāpārśva, Mahodara, Akampana, Nikumbha, Śuka, Sāraṇa, Saṃhrādi, Dhūmaketu, Mahādaṃṣṭra, Mahāmukha, Jambumālin, Mahāmālin, and the *rākṣasa* Virūpākṣa. Surrounded by all those immensely powerful warriors, that bull among *rākṣasas* Sumālin, Rāvaṇa's grandfather, plunged into the enemy hosts. Together with those night-roaming *rākṣasas*, he scattered in his rage all the hosts of the gods with all manner of sharp weapons.

[27–30] "At this juncture, the heroic Vasu named Sāvitra, eighth among the Vasus, plunged into that great battle. Now there arose a battle between the gods—who were furious at the *rākṣasas*' boasting of never turning back in battle—and the *rākṣasas*. Then, as the gods stood before them in battle, the heroic *rākṣasas* slaughtered them by the hundreds and thousands with all sorts of fearsome weapons. But in that battle, through their own blazing

energy, the gods, with their various weapons, sent those fearsome and immensely powerful *rākṣasas* to the abode of Yama.

[31–33] “At this juncture, the heroic *rākṣasa* named Sumālin, enraged, entered the fray with all sorts of weapons. Enraged, he scattered the entire army of the gods with all sorts of sharp weapons, just as the wind might rain clouds. Pelted with lances, fearsome darts, and hails of huge arrows, all the gods, who had assembled, could not stand their ground.

[34–36] “Then, even though the thirty gods were being scattered by Sumālin, the god Sāvitra, eighth among the Vasus, stood his ground. But even as that night-roaming *rākṣasa* attacked, that warrior of immense blazing energy, surrounded by his own troops, warded him off in battle through his valor. Then there was a duel, extremely terrifying to the world, between the two frenzied warriors—Sumālin and the Vasu—neither of whom ever turned back in battle.

[37–40] “Then, with huge arrows, the very great Vasu instantly brought down Sumālin’s great serpent-chariot. And having thus destroyed Sumālin’s chariot in battle with hundreds of sharp arrows, the Vasu seized a mace with his hand in order to kill him. Quickly seizing that splendid, blazing mace, which resembled the rod of Kāla, Sāvitra brought it down upon Sumālin’s head. And then, as it fell on Sumālin’s head, that mace, which resembled a blazing meteor, looked like a mighty thunderbolt hurled at a mountain by thousand-eyed Indra.

[41–42] “Once he was struck down in battle and reduced to ashes by that mace, his body—neither flesh nor bone—could be seen. When the *rākṣasas* saw that Sumālin had been struck down in battle, they all fled en masse in all directions, wailing loudly.”

Sarga 28

[1–4] “Then, seeing that Sumālin had been slain and reduced to ashes by the Vasu and observing that his own army, harried by arrows, had fled, Rāvaṇa’s mighty son Meghanāda, enraged, turned back all the *rākṣasas* toward battle and took his stand. Mounted in his chariot, which shone like fire and moved at its owner’s will, the great chariot-warrior raced toward the army of the gods like a blazing fire toward a woodland. Bearing various weapons, he plunged into that army, and the gods fled in all directions at the mere sight of him.

[5–6] “Although he wished to fight, not one of them took a stand there. Then, seeing that they were all terrified, Śakra, rallying them, cried: ‘Have no fear! Do not flee! You must return to the fight. For my son, who has never been defeated, is going forth to battle.’

[7–9] “Then Śakra’s son, the god known as Jayanta, rushed into battle in a chariot of marvelous construction. All the thirty gods surrounded Śacī’s son and, confronting Rāvaṇa’s son in battle, they took their stand. On behalf of great Indra’s son and the son of the *rākṣasa* lord, a tremendous battle took place, befitting the gods and the *rākṣasas*.

[10–16] “But then the son of the *rākṣasa* rained down arrows adorned with gold upon Jayanta’s charioteer Gomukha, Mātali’s son. But in the same way Śacī’s son, Jayanta, in a rage, pierced Rāvaṇi, as well as his charioteer, on the battlefield. But Rāvaṇi, that *rākṣasa* of immense blazing energy, his eyes wide in his rage, pelted the son of Śakra with a hail of arrows. Seizing great and powerful weapons, Rāvaṇi let fly hundred-slayers, iron cudgels, darts, maces, swords, battle-axes, and enormous mountain peaks. As Rāvaṇa’s son was striking down his enemies, the worlds were terrified and a great darkness arose. Then the army of the gods, which had been surrounding Śacī’s son, was afflicted in every way and ran helter-skelter. Neither the gods nor their enemies could recognize one another. Scattered on every side, they ran helter-skelter.

[17–20] “At this juncture, the valorous hero Puloman, son of Diti, appeared. He caught up Śacī’s son and carried him away. Taking his grandson Jayanta, his maternal grandfather Puloman—who had fathered Śacī Paulomī—entered the vast ocean. When the gods saw the extremely frightening disappearance of Jayanta, they were terrified and dejected, and they fled in all directions. But Rāvaṇi was excited, and, surrounded by his own troops, he charged at the gods and released a mighty roar.

[21–26] “When the lord of the gods saw the disappearance of his son and the valor of Rāvaṇi, he said to Mātali, ‘Have my chariot brought up.’ Then, driven by Mātali, that divine and extremely fearsome chariot, swift as thought and ready for battle, drew near. Once Indra had mounted the chariot, thundering clouds laced with lightning went before it, rumbling and driven by the wind. All sorts of musical instruments were played, and hymns of praise were sung. And the troupes of *apsarases* danced all together as Vāsava went forth to battle. Surrounded by the Rudras, the

Vasus, the Ādityas, and the *sādhyas*, together with the hosts of the Maruts, all of them bearing all sorts of weapons, the overlord of the thirty gods went forth. But even as Śakra went forth, the wind blew harshly and the sun, bringer of light, grew dim, while huge, blazing meteors appeared.

[27–30] "At this juncture, the heroic and glorious ten-necked Rāvaṇa mounted his divine chariot, which had been fashioned by Viśvakarman. It was encircled by enormous, horrifying serpents, the wind from whose exhalations seemed to scorch the very battlefield. Surrounded by heroic *daityas* and night-roaming *rākṣasas*, his divine chariot turned toward the battlefield and rushed straight at great Indra. Waving off his son, he took his stand himself, so that Rāvaṇi withdrew from the battle and stood aside.

[31–34] "Then there commenced a battle between the gods and the *rākṣasas*. In that battle, there was a fearsome hail of weapons, as if from storm clouds. And as for evil-minded Kumbhakarṇa, he, armed with all sorts of weapons, fought anyone at all in that battle without even knowing who they were. In a total frenzy, he assailed the gods with anything he could—fangs, arms, feet, javelins, iron cudgels, and arrows. Then, in that battle with the illustrious Rudras, together with the Ādityas, that fierce warrior, the night-roaming *rākṣasa*, was slashed everywhere with weapons.

[35–38] "In that battle, with all sorts of sharp weapons, the thirty gods, together with the hosts of the Maruts, put to flight the entire *rākṣasa* army. Struck down with weapons, some of them writhed on the ground, while others remained fixed to their mounts in the battle. Some of those night-roaming *rākṣasas*, unable to move, remained clinging with both arms to their chariots, elephants, donkeys, camels, serpents, horses, dolphins, boars, and creatures with the faces of *piśācas*, while others, grievously wounded with weapons by the gods, died.

[39–40] "With the slain and stupefied *rākṣasas* scattered across the ground, the wreckage of battle looked like a painting. In the forefront of the battle, there flowed a river streaming with blood in place of water. It was thronged with adjutant storks and vultures and had weapons in place of crocodiles.

[41–46] "At this juncture, valorous ten-necked Rāvaṇa, in a rage at seeing his entire army struck down by the gods, plunged quickly into the huge ocean of their army and, striking down the thirty gods in battle, raced straight toward Śakra. Then Śakra twanged his mighty bow with a

tremendous roar, so that the ten directions reverberated with the thunder of its twanging. Drawing that mighty bow, Indra let fall on Rāvaṇa's head arrows with the brilliance of fire or the sun. And in the same fashion, great-armed ten-necked Rāvaṇa, standing his ground, pelted Śakra with hails of arrows loosed from his bow. Then, as those two battled fiercely with hails of arrows on every side, nothing at all could be discerned, for everything was shrouded in darkness."

Sarga 29

[1–4] "Then, although that darkness had come on, the *rākṣasas*, intoxicated with their own strength, and the gods fought on, slaughtering one another. But by that point, the army of the gods had left standing only a tenth part of the vast host of the *rākṣasas*. The remainder had been led to the abode of Yama. Since everything was cloaked in darkness, the gods and *rākṣasas* could not recognize one another and so went on fighting among themselves. And while everything was shrouded in a mass of darkness, only three—Indra, Rāvaṇa, and immensely powerful Rāvaṇi—did not succumb to delusion.

[5–11] "Now, when Rāvaṇa saw that his entire army had been struck down in battle, he flew into a towering rage and released a tremendous roar. In his rage, that unassailable warrior addressed his charioteer, who was in the chariot: 'Take me through the midst of the enemy army, right through to the end. This very day, fighting from the sky with all sorts of immensely powerful weapons, I myself shall destroy all the thirty gods through my valor. I shall kill Indra, Varuṇa, Kubera, bestower of wealth, and Yama. After I have quickly slain the thirty gods, I myself shall reign over all. And you must not give way to despair but drive my chariot swiftly. Now I tell you a second time, take me right through to the end. This place where we are now is the region of the Nandana garden. Now you must take me to where Mount Udaya stands.' And when his charioteer had heard those words of his, he directed his horses, which were as swift as thought, right through the middle of their enemies.

[12–16] "Now, when Śakra, lord of the gods, who was standing in his chariot, realized his intention, he spoke these words to the gods, who were engaged in battle: 'Listen, you gods, to my words regarding what I would like. The *rākṣasa* ten-necked Rāvaṇa is to be taken alive, straightaway. Just

like an ocean with towering waves on the full-moon day, this exceedingly powerful warrior is going to crash through our ranks with his chariot, which has the force of a gale. For it is not possible to kill him just now, as he is utterly fearless through the gift of a boon. Therefore, we must capture the *rākṣasa*. You must be vigilant in battle! I have enjoyed the lordship of the triple world only after imprisoning Bali. I would now like to imprison this evildoer in the same way.'

[17–20] "Then Śakra, of immense blazing energy, leaving Rāvaṇa, took a stand in another area where he fought on, annihilating the *rākṣasas* in battle. But ten-necked Rāvaṇa, never retreating, plunged into the army from the north, while Indra of the hundred sacrifices plunged in by the southern flank. The lord of the *rākṣasas* then penetrated the entire army of the gods to a distance of a hundred leagues and pelted it with hails of arrows. Although Śakra saw that his own army had been penetrated, he remained calm, and, cutting off ten-faced Rāvaṇa, he stopped his advance.

[21–23] "At this juncture, when the *dānavas* and the *rākṣasas* saw that Rāvaṇa had been checked by Śakra, they cried out, 'Alas! We are lost!' Then Rāvaṇi, beside himself with rage, mounted his chariot and, in a towering rage, plunged into that extremely fearsome army. Resorting to the supernatural power that had been given to him long ago by Śiva, lord of cattle, he became invisible to all beings and pelted that army.

[24–27] "Then, leaving aside the gods, he made straight for Śakra. But great Indra of immense blazing energy could not see that son of his enemy. After striking Mātali and his horses with splendid arrows, he, shooting rapidly, pelted great Indra with a hail of arrows. Then Śakra, abandoning his chariot and dismissing Mātali, mounted Airāvata and went in search of Rāvaṇi. But through his supernatural power of illusion, the *rākṣasa* could not be seen in battle even as he pelted great Indra of immeasurable might with torrents of arrows.

[28–29] "When Rāvaṇi reckoned that Indra was exhausted, he bound him through his supernatural power and led him toward his own army. When all the immortal gods saw great Indra forcibly carried off in that battle by that supernatural power, they cried, 'How can this be? For Rāvaṇi, who, through his supernatural power, is leading Indra—himself a master of spells—away, is nowhere to be seen.'

[30–31] “And at this juncture, all the hosts of the gods, in a towering rage, assaulted Rāvaṇa with hails of weapons. For having encountered the Vasus, Ādityas, and the hosts of the Maruts, Rāvaṇa, battered by weapons, could neither make a stand in battle nor fight on.

[32–35] “But when Rāvaṇi saw that his father was exhausted and that his luster was dimmed by weapons, he, still invisible, said this to him in the midst of battle: ‘Come, Father, let us go. For the work of battle is done. Sir, you have been victorious, as you must know. Therefore, you should be easy in your mind and free from anxiety. For I have captured Śakra, who is the lord of the army of the gods and of the entire triple world. And I have broken the pride of the gods. Having captured your enemy through your might, you should enjoy the triple world as you please. Why should you exert yourself in vain, since further battle would yield no benefit?’

[36–40] “When ten-faced Rāvaṇa had heard those words of Rāvaṇi, his mind was put at ease, and he withdrew from the army of the gods and from the work of battle. Then the mighty lord of the night-roaming *rākṣasas*, having attained victory, was free from his anxiety concerning the battle. Delighted, he prepared to depart from there to his palace, and, turning to his son, he said these words: ‘O you whose valor is equal to that of the immortal gods, through your feats of valor befitting the greatest of warriors you have increased the pride of my lineage in that you have defeated the lord of the thirty gods and the thirty gods as well. So bring Vāsava quickly and, surrounded by the army, proceed from here to the city. And as you proceed I will quickly follow behind you together with my ministers.’ Then, surrounded by his forces and together with his mounts, the *rākṣasa* Rāvaṇi, his mind delighted, took the lord of the thirty gods and, reaching his own palace, dismissed the *rākṣasas*.”

Sarga 30

[1–2] “Now, when that immensely powerful god, great Indra, had been defeated by Rāvaṇa’s son, the gods placed Prajāpati before them and proceeded to Laṅkā. Approaching Rāvaṇa, who was surrounded by his sons and brothers, Prajāpati, hovering in the sky, addressed him in a conciliatory fashion:

[3–7] “ ‘Rāvaṇa, my child, I am pleased with your son’s feats in battle. Oh, the magnificence of his valor! He is your equal or even your superior.

You, sir, have conquered the entire triple world through your own blazing energy, and your vow has borne fruit. And I am indeed pleased with your son. And, Rāvaṇa, this exceedingly mighty son of yours, Rāvaṇi, shall now be famed throughout the world as Indrajit, "Conqueror of Indra." Indeed, your majesty, this *rākṣasa*, relying on whom you brought the thirty gods under your control, will be a mighty conqueror of his enemies. Therefore, great-armed warrior, please release great Indra, the chastiser of Pāka. Moreover, what must the gods, denizens of heaven, offer you for his release?'

[8–9] "Then Indrajit, of immense blazing energy and victorious in battle, said, 'For his release, I now choose immortality, O God.' But the lotus-born god Brahmā said to Rāvaṇi, 'There is no such thing as absolute immortality for any living beings on earth.'

[10–13] "Then Indrajit addressed lotus-born Brahmā, who hovered before him: 'In that case, you must hear about the supernatural power that I demand for the release of Indra of the hundred sacrifices. My abiding desire, O God, is that whenever I strive to conquer my enemies, I should enter battle only after having worshiped Agni, the purifier, with oblations. But, O God, let my death occur in battle only if I should fight before that rite is completed, with its *mantras* and oblations to Agni, the shining god of fire. Moreover, every other man solicits immortality through asceticism. But I shall secure immortality through valor.'

[14–15] "The god Prajāpati said to him, 'Let it be so!' So Indrajit released Śakra, and the gods returned to the highest heaven. At this juncture, Rāma, Śakra, despondent and with his garments and garlands in disarray, gave way to brooding, his mind overwhelmed with gloomy thoughts.

[16–18] "When the god Prajāpati saw him in such a state, he said: 'O Indra of the hundred sacrifices, why are you so sorrowful? You must remember your evil deed. O lord, foremost of the immortal gods, long ago I created many people. They were all of a single type. They all had the same speech, and they all looked the same in every respect. There was absolutely no difference among them, either in their appearance or in their characteristics. Therefore, with my mind focused, I began to ponder over these people.

[19–22] " 'Then, in order to create some distinction among them, I selected from those people whatever was most excellent in each and every limb and fashioned a woman. With those qualities of beauty, I fashioned a woman devoid of all imperfection. And so I gave her the name Ahalyā, "Devoid of Imperfection." But once that woman had been fashioned, O lord of the gods, I became concerned as to whom she should belong, bull among gods. But because of your exalted station, you, Lord Śakra, smasher of citadels, reckoned in your mind, "She must be my wife."

[23–27] " 'I placed her under the guardianship of great Gautama, and when she had been in his care for many years, he returned her. Then, once I had made certain of the self-control of that great sage and had recognized his perfection in asceticism, I gave her to him to be his wife. That righteous great sage then made love with her. But since she had been given to Gautama, the gods lost all hope. You, however, were infuriated, and, consumed with lust, you went to that sage's ashram. Then you spied that woman, who was like a shining flame of fire. Overwhelmed with lust and filled with rage, Śakra, you raped her. And you were seen in the ashram by that supreme seer.

[28–33] " 'Then, O lord of the gods, you experienced a reversal of your condition. For the enraged seer of supreme blazing energy cursed you as follows: "Since, Vāsava, showing no fear, you raped my wife, therefore, your majesty, you shall fall into the hands of your enemies in battle. And this tendency, evil-minded wretch, that you have established in the world, will now be common to all men as well. Of this there is no doubt. And as for that great and very grievous violation that will arise, half of it will be ascribed to him who perpetrates it, while half will be ascribed to you. Nor, smasher of citadels, will your position be permanent because of your association with this violation that you have established in the world. And whosoever may become lord of the gods, he shall be so only temporarily. Such is the curse that I have pronounced." That is what Gautama said to you at that time.

[34–36] " 'Then that sage of great austerities addressed his wife, reviling her: "Unchaste woman, become invisible within the confines of my ashram. Since, endowed with beauty and youth, you were unfaithful, you shall no longer be the only beautiful woman in the world. That beauty of yours, once

so hard to obtain and on account of which this infatuation came about, shall henceforth belong to all people.”

[37–40] “ ‘And so from that time onward, many people have been endowed with beauty. It is because of the sage’s unleashing of that curse that all this has come to pass. Now, great-armed Vāsava, you must remember the evil deed that you did on account of which, and for no other reason, you were captured by your enemy. Now you must immediately perform the *vaiṣṇava* sacrifice with your mind fully focused. Only then, purified by that sacrifice, shall you return to the highest heaven. Nor, lord of the gods, was your son slain in the great battle. He was taken by his grandfather and kept in the ocean, the great receptacle of waters.’

[41–42] “When he had heard this, great Indra performed the *vaiṣṇava* sacrifice and returned once more to highest heaven and ruled the gods. Such, Rāma, was the might of Indrajit, which I have told you about. He conquered the lord of the gods. What then of other living beings?”

Sarga 31

[1–3] Then Rāma of immense blazing energy, in his amazement, once more bowing deferentially, addressed these words to that foremost of seers, Agastya: “Holy one, foremost of the twice-born, were people so dispirited then that Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, did not meet with effective opposition? Or, since so many kings were conquered, is it that those lords of the earth were devoid of might and deprived of splendid, divine weapon-spells?”

[4] When the holy seer Agastya had heard Rāma Rāghava’s words, he smiled and addressed him, as Grandfather Brahmā might the Lord.

[5–7] “In this fashion, Rāma, O lord of the earth and bull among kings, Rāvaṇa wandered the earth, harrying its kings. At length he reached the city called Māhiṣmatī, which, in its close proximity to Agni of the golden seed, was as resplendent as the city of heaven. In his blazing splendor, its king, whose name was Arjuna, was the equal of Agni of the golden seed. For Agni constantly dwelt in his firepit, which was strewn with *kuśa* grass.

[8–11] “Now on that very day that mighty king Arjuna, overlord of the Haihayas, had gone to the Narmadā River to take his pleasure with his womenfolk. But Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, asked Arjuna’s ministers: ‘Where is Arjuna, your king, today? Please tell me at once. I am Rāvaṇa

and have come eager to do battle with that foremost of men. Now you must calmly inform him of my arrival.’ Addressed in this fashion by Rāvaṇa, those extremely wise ministers told the lord of the *rākṣasas* that the lord of the earth was away.

[12–16] “When the son of Viśravas had heard from the townsfolk that Arjuna was gone, he departed and came to the Vindhya mountains, which resembled the Himalayas. Rāvaṇa gazed upon the Vindhya range. It seemed to burst forth from the earth, to pierce the clouds and scrape the sky. It had a thousand peaks, and its caves were haunted by lions. With the icy waters plunging from its precipices, it seemed to be laughing shrilly. It was immensely high, and, with the gods, *dānavas*, and *gandharvas* sporting with their womenfolk, together with the *kinnaras* and troupes of *apsarases*, it was truly heaven. As it loomed there, with its streams pouring forth—through its fissures—water as bright as the sky, it seemed to be flashing forth flickering tongues.

[17–19] “Gazing at the Vindhya range, which, with its caves and flickering flames, resembled the Himalayas, Rāvaṇa proceeded to the Narmadā River. It was a holy river flowing to the western ocean, its waters rushing over stones. Its pools were churned up by buffalo, gaur, lions, tigers, bears, and great elephants—all of them oppressed by heat and thirst. It was always thronged with *cakravākas* and *kāraṇḍas*, as well as *haṃsas*, *jalakukkuṭas*, and *sārasa* cranes—all of them impassioned and warbling constantly.

[20–23] “The ten-faced bull among *rākṣasas* descended quickly from the Puṣpaka. Then, just as one might enter the embrace of a lovely and beloved woman, he immersed himself in the Narmadā, the foremost of rivers, which had blossoming trees for a chaplet, a pair of *cakravākas* for breasts, broad banks for hips, a line of *haṃsas* for a lovely girdle, a body smeared with pollen, the foam of the water for a white mantle, a plunge into its waters for an embrace, and blooming lotuses for lovely eyes. Afterward, seated on its charming bank, which was adorned with all kinds of flowers, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, together with his ministers, took pleasure in the sight of the Narmadā.

[24–27] “Then Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, smiling playfully, addressed his ministers there—Mārīca, Śuka, and Sāraṇa: ‘The scorching sun, maker of day, now at the zenith, seems, with his thousand rays, to turn the world to

gold. Yet, realizing that I am sitting here, the sun seems more like the moon. Cooled by the waters of the Narmadā, the fragrant breeze blows gently out of fear of me, dispelling my fatigue. And even this best of rivers, the Narmadā, the increaser of delight, concealing her fish, birds, and waves, stands like a timid and beautiful woman.

[28–31] " 'You gentlemen have been wounded with weapons in battle by kings who were equal to Indra, and you are smeared with blood like the ointment of sandalwood. You should therefore immerse yourselves in the Narmadā, which gives happiness to men, just as the great rutting elephants, headed by Mahāpadma, plunge into the Ganges. For once you have bathed in this mighty river, you will rid yourselves of all evils. But as for me, I shall calmly make a floral offering to Śiva, Umā's lord, here on this bank, whose luster is like that of the autumnal moon.'

[32–35] "Addressed in this fashion by Rāvaṇa, Mārīca, Śuka, and Sāraṇa, along with Mahodara and Dhūmrākṣa, immersed themselves in the Narmadā. The Narmadā River was as agitated by those elephants among the *rākṣasa* lords as is the Ganges by those mighty elephants, Vāmana, Añjana, Padma, and the rest. Then, when the *rākṣasas* had bathed in the lovely waters of the Narmadā, they came out and gathered flowers for Rāvaṇa's offering. And there on Narmadā's lovely bank, whose luster was like that of a white cloud, the *rākṣasa* lords in a short time heaped up a veritable mountain of flowers.

[36–37] "Once the flowers had been gathered, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, went down to the river to bathe, just as might a mighty elephant to the Ganges. And when Rāvaṇa had bathed there according to the ritual prescriptions and had quietly intoned an unsurpassed *mantra*, he emerged from the waters of the Narmadā.

[38–40] "Seven *rākṣasas* followed Rāvaṇa as he proceeded, his hands cupped in reverence. And wherever Rāvaṇa, the overlord of the *rākṣasas*, went, they carried a *liṅga* made of *jāmbūnada* gold. After installing that *liṅga* on an altar of sand, Rāvaṇa worshiped it with fragrant articles and flowers with the fragrance of nectar. And then, when the night-roaming *rākṣasa* had worshiped Hara, the dispeller of the afflictions of the virtuous and the supreme granter of boons who was adorned with the rays of the moon, he sang and, stretching out his long arms, danced."

Sarga 32

[1–3] “Now, not far from where Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, was making his floral offering on the bank of the Narmadā, Arjuna, foremost of conquerors and the lord and master of Māhiṣmatī, was sporting with his women in the Narmadā’s waters. In their midst, King Arjuna was then as resplendent as a bull elephant in the midst of a thousand elephant cows.

[4–6] “Eager to discover the ultimate strength of his thousand arms, Arjuna then obstructed the Narmadā’s current with them. When the clear water reached the dam made by Kārtavīrya’s arms, it flowed rapidly upstream, crumbling the riverbanks. Carrying along fish, crocodiles, dolphins, flowers, and mats of *kuśa* grass, the current of the Narmadā’s waters looked just as it would in the rainy season.

[7–10] “As if directed by Kārtavīrya, the current of water swept away Rāvaṇa’s entire floral offering. And Rāvaṇa, abandoning his half-completed rite, glared at his beloved Narmadā as if at a cherished wife who had become disobedient. But when Rāvaṇa saw the current of the water flowing from the west and swelling like a tidal wave, he moved eastward and then saw the river—whose appearance was like that of an obedient woman and whose waterfowl were unruffled—in its splendid natural state.

[11–16] “And then, with a finger of his right hand accompanied by a brief word, ten-faced Rāvaṇa directed Śuka and Sāraṇa to seek the source of that surge. Commanded by Rāvaṇa, the two heroic brothers, Śuka and Sāraṇa, set out, flying through the sky and heading west. But when they had gone a mere half a league, the two night-roaming *rākṣasas* spied a man and many women playing in the water. With his hair disordered by the water, he resembled a huge *sāla* tree. The corners of his eyes were red with passion, and in splendor he was the likeness of Madana, the god of love. That crusher of his foes was obstructing the river with his thousand arms as a mountain might obstruct the land with its thousand foothills. He was completely surrounded by a thousand young and exquisite women, just as a bull elephant might be by a thousand impassioned elephant cows.

[17–20] “Now, when the two *rākṣasas* Śuka and Sāraṇa had seen that most amazing man, they turned back and, approaching Rāvaṇa, addressed him: ‘Lord of the *rākṣasas*, someone who resembles a huge *sāla* tree has blocked up the Narmadā like a dam and is having his womenfolk play. And the river, its waters obstructed by him with his thousand arms, is sending

forth again and again floods that resemble tidal waves.’ Having listened while Śuka and Sāraṇa were speaking in this fashion, Rāvaṇa said, ‘It is Arjuna!’ and leapt to his feet, eager for battle.

[21–24] “The moment the lord of the *rākṣasas* set out toward Arjuna, the clouds released a thunderclap accompanied by showers of blood. Nonetheless, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, surrounded by Mahodara, Mahāpārśva, Dhūmrākṣa, Śuka, and Sāraṇa, proceeded to where Arjuna was. Then, in a short time, the mighty *rākṣasa*, as black as collyrium, reached that fearsome pool in the Narmadā. There the king of the *rākṣasas* spied Arjuna, the lord of men, surrounded by women as a bull elephant might be by impassioned elephant cows.

[25–26] “His eyes red with rage, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, arrogant in his might, in a deep voice, addressed Arjuna’s ministers thus: ‘Ministers! Inform the Haihaya king at once that he who goes by the name of Rāvaṇa has arrived for the purpose of battle.’

[27–30] “And when Arjuna’s counselors had heard Rāvaṇa’s words, they sprang up with their weapons and addressed these words to him: ‘Well done, Rāvaṇa! You really know the time for a battle, since, just as a tiger might attack a rutting bull elephant in the midst of his cows, you wish to fight with our king while he is impassioned and surrounded by women. Be patient for today, Daśagrīva, please stay here for the night. If you still wish to fight, dear fellow, you can meet Arjuna in battle tomorrow. If, on the other hand, you are in such haste in your thirst for battle, you must first strike us down and only then join battle with Arjuna.’

[31–35] “The famished ministers of Rāvaṇa then slaughtered those ministers of the king and devoured them. Then, on the bank of the Narmadā, there arose a tumultuous noise from the followers of Arjuna and the counselors of Rāvaṇa. Arjuna’s troops rushed up from every side, assailing Rāvaṇa and his ministers with arrows, iron cudgels, and lances that were like thunderbolts, together with nooses. The onset of the warriors of the Haihaya overlord was extremely fierce, like the roar of the ocean filled with sharks, fish, and crocodiles. But Rāvaṇa’s ministers—Prahasta, Śuka, and Sāraṇa, whose blazing energy was that of fire—burned up Kārtavīrya’s army in their rage.

[36–40] “Then the men who guarded his gateway informed Arjuna, as he was sporting, of that feat of Rāvaṇa and his counselors. After telling his

womenfolk, 'Have no fear!' Arjuna then came up out of the water, as might Añjana from the waters of the Ganges. Then, his eyes clouded with rage, the immensely fearsome fire that was Arjuna blazed forth like the fire that ends a cosmic era. Wearing armlets of splendid gold, he swiftly seized his mace and drove off the *rākṣasas*, as does the sun, maker of day, the darkness. Raising that great mace, which was whirled about by the force of his arms, Arjuna charged with the swiftness of Garuḍa.

[41–43] "But blocking his path, as did the Vindhya mountain that of the sun, and armed with a cudgel, stood Prahasta, as immovable as the Vindhya itself. Puffed up with pride, Prahasta hurled that fearsome cudgel bound with iron and then roared like a thundercloud in his rage. At the tip of that cudgel as it left Prahasta's hand there appeared a fire that resembled a chaplet of *aśoka* blossoms and that seemed to be blazing.

[44–47] "But Arjuna Kārtavīrya, who was armed with his mace and whose strength was that of an elephant, skillfully evaded that cudgel as it sped toward him. Then the lord of the Haihayas charged at Prahasta, whirling that massive mace, which was held aloft by five hundred of his arms. Then, struck violently by him with that mace, Prahasta was stunned and fell like a mountain struck by the *vajra* of Indra, wielder of the *vajra*. When Mārīca, Śuka, and Sāraṇa, along with Mahodara and Dhūmrākṣa, saw that Prahasta had fallen, they fled the battlefield.

[48–52] "Now that his counselors had run away and Prahasta had been felled, Rāvaṇa swiftly charged at Arjuna, the foremost of kings. Then there commenced a fearsome and hair-raising battle between the thousand-armed king and the twenty-armed *rākṣasa*. The *rākṣasa* and Arjuna belabored each other powerfully with their maces, like two roiling seas, like two moving mountains, like two suns filled with blazing energy, like two burning fires, like two bull elephants arrogant in their might, like two bulls fighting over an impassioned cow, like two roaring thunderclouds, like two lions haughty in their might, or like Rudra and Kāla filled with rage.

[53–56] "But the two, man and *rākṣasa*, withstood those mace blows, just as mountains might withstand the fearsome blows of a thunderbolt. Just as an echo inevitably arises from claps of thunder, so did all the directions resonate with the blows of their maces. As Arjuna's mace fell on the chest of his enemy, it lent a golden glow to the heavens, as might a flashing bolt of lightning. And by the same token, the mace, which Rāvaṇa brought down

again and again on Arjuna's chest, resembled a blazing meteor falling on a mighty mountain.

[57–60] "Neither Arjuna nor the lord of the *rākṣasa* hosts experienced any fatigue. Indeed, the battle between them was just like the one long ago between Bali and Indra. The foremost of men and the foremost of *rākṣasas* belabored each other as might two great bulls with their horns or two bull elephants with their tusks. But then, in that great battle, Arjuna, enraged, let fly his mace with all his might right at the middle of Rāvaṇa's chest. But because of the protection afforded by the grant of his boon, that mace, striking Rāvaṇa's chest, broke in two and fell to the ground like a feeble army.

[61–65] "However, because of that mace blow delivered by Arjuna, Rāvaṇa staggered back a bow's length and collapsed, moaning softly. Then, perceiving that ten-necked Rāvaṇa was stunned, Arjuna swiftly seized him, just as Garuḍa might a great serpent. And having forcibly seized ten-faced Rāvaṇa with his thousand arms, the mighty king bound him as Nārāyaṇa did Bali. As ten-necked Rāvaṇa was being bound, the perfected beings, celestial bards, and the gods cried out, 'Well done!' and scattered flowers on Arjuna's head. Seizing him as a tiger might a deer or as the king of lions might an elephant, the Haihaya king, in his delight, roared again and again like a thundercloud.

[66–68] "But now, having regained consciousness and seeing that ten-faced Rāvaṇa was bound, Prahasta, in a rage, together with the *rākṣasas*, charged at the king. The onset of those night-roaming *rākṣasas* as they rushed to the attack was like the wondrous rise of the seas at the waning of summer. Crying, 'Release him! Release him! Stop! Stop!' again and again, they then loosed cudgels and lances at Arjuna.

[69–72] "But Arjuna, the destroyer of his enemies, was unfazed. He quickly caught those weapons of the foes of the immortal gods before they reached him. Then, with those very same excellent and irresistible weapons, he wounded the *rākṣasas* and drove them off as the wind might clouds. And having thus frightened off the *rākṣasas*, Arjuna Kārtavīrya, surrounded by his friends and taking Rāvaṇa along, entered the city. Then, as the twice-born brahmans, together with the townsfolk, showered him with masses of blossoms and unhusked rice, Arjuna, who resembled Indra, invoked by

many, entered that city, just as did thousand-eyed Indra when he had captured Bali."

Sarga 33

[1–3] "Now the seer Pulastya happened to hear about the capture of Rāvaṇa—which was like capturing the wind—as it was related in heaven by the gods. Then that great seer, despite his extraordinary self-control, was moved by affection for his grandson, and he went to see the lord of Māhiṣmatī. Taking to the path of the winds, that twice-born brahman, whose pace was equal to that of the wind and who strode with the speed of thought, reached the city of Māhiṣmatī.

[4–5] "He entered the city, which resembled Amarāvatī and which was filled with happy and prosperous people, as Brahmā might enter Indra's Amarāvatī. As he approached he was as hard to look upon as would be Āditya, the sun god, if he were approaching on foot. But then, recognizing him, the people informed Arjuna.

[6–8] "Upon hearing the words 'It is Pulastya,' the lord of the Haihayas, raising his cupped hands to his forehead, went forth to meet that foremost of twice-born brahmans. And his *purohita*, taking the guest-offering and *madhuparka* offering of milk and honey, went before the king, as Bṛhaspati would before Indra. Then, when he spied the seer approaching like the rising sun, bringer of light, Arjuna worshiped him who had come, as Indra might the Lord.

[9–12] "And after he had seen to it that he had been given the *madhuparka*, water to wash his feet, and the guest-offering, the lord of kings addressed Pulastya in a voice breaking with joy: 'Today, Māhiṣmatī has been rendered the equal of Amarāvatī since, lord among the lords of twice-born brahmans, I am seeing you, who are so hard to see. Today I have achieved felicity, O lord. Today my lineage is exalted in that I may worship your feet, which are worshiped by the hosts of the gods. This kingdom, my sons, my wives, and I are yours. O brahman, what may we do? What must we do? Please command us, sir.'

[13–16] "Now, after having inquired of the king concerning the proper state of righteousness, the sacred fires, and his dependents, Pulastya then addressed Arjuna, king of the Haihayas: 'Lord of kings—you whose eyes are like shining lotuses and whose face is like the full moon—your strength,

by which you vanquished ten-necked Rāvaṇa, is unequaled. My invincible grandson, for fear of whom the ocean and wind stand motionless, has been bound by you today. Thus, you have increased your fame, my son, and spread your name. Now, dear boy, entreated by my words, please release ten-faced Rāvaṇa.'

[17–20] "Accepting Pulastya's command without a word, Arjuna, the lord among the lords of kings, happily released the lord of the *rākṣasas*. When he had released that foe of the thirty gods, he honored him with heavenly ornaments, garlands, and garments. Then, after forging with him a pact of nonaggression witnessed by Agni, Arjuna prostrated himself before the son of Brahmā and returned to his home. After having met with Pulastya as well, the valorous lord of the *rākṣasas*, given hospitality with an embrace, was dismissed, much abashed. Once Pulastya, the foremost of sages and son of Grandfather Brahmā, had brought about the release of ten-necked Rāvaṇa, he proceeded to Brahmā's world.

[21–23] "And that was how Rāvaṇa was overpowered by Kārtavīrya and how he obtained his freedom once again through the words of Pulastya. Thus, O delight of the Rāghavas, there are those who are mightier even than the mighty. Therefore, he who desires his own well-being should not hold his enemy in contempt. After the king of the flesh-eating *rākṣasas* had formed an alliance with thousand-armed Arjuna, he once more roamed the entire earth in his arrogance, slaughtering men."

Sarga 34

[1–2] "Once released by Arjuna, Rāvaṇa, the lord of the *rākṣasas*, no longer despondent, roamed the entire earth. And whomever he heard of as having great strength—whether *rākṣasa* or human—Rāvaṇa encountered him and, in his arrogance, challenged him to battle.

[3–9] "Then, one day, he came to the city of Kiṣkindhā, protected by Vālin, and challenged golden-garlanded Vālin to battle. Then Lord Tāra, a minister of the monkey and the paternal uncle of Tārā, addressed these words to Rāvaṇa, who had come, eager for battle: 'Vālin, who would be your equal in strength, O lord of the *rākṣasas*, is gone, and there is none other among the leaping monkeys capable of standing before you. Vālin will return momentarily, after he has performed his *sandhyā* ritual in all four oceans, Rāvaṇa. So just wait a moment. Look at these heaps of bones,

as white as conch shells. They belonged to those who came seeking battle, your majesty, and who were then slain by the blazing energy of the monkey lord. And even if you were to drink the nectar of immortality, Rāvaṇa, nonetheless, were you to encounter Vālin, that would be the end of your life, *rākṣasa*. On the other hand, if you are in a hurry to die, you should go to the southern ocean. There you will see Vālin, who is like the sun, bringer of light, come to earth.'

[10–12] "But reviling Tāra, Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, mounted the Puṣpaka and proceeded to the southern ocean. There, he spied Vālin, who—resembling a golden mountain and with a face like the rising sun—was absorbed in the performance of his *sandhyā* rites. Rāvaṇa, who resembled collyrium, descended from the Puṣpaka and advanced swiftly with silent footsteps in order to seize him.

[13–16] "But Rāvaṇa, whose intention was evil, was spotted by Vālin, who by chance had opened his eyes. Still, Vālin was not perturbed. Just as a lion might a hare, or Garuḍa a serpent, Vālin, spying evil-intentioned Rāvaṇa, did not take him seriously, thinking: 'This evil-minded Rāvaṇa wishes to capture me. But today, hanging him from my armpit, I shall travel to the mighty oceans. Everyone will see my enemy, ten-necked Rāvaṇa, hanging at my side, his thighs, hands, and garments dangling like a serpent hanging from Garuḍa.'

[17–21] "Having formed this resolution, Vālin, pricking up his ears, went on intoning vedic *mantras* as he stood there like the king of the mountains. The two kings—the one of the tawny monkeys, the other of the *rākṣasas*—each eager to seize the other and arrogant in his might, strove mightily toward that end. Even though his back was turned, Vālin, judging from the sound of his footsteps that Rāvaṇa was within arm's reach, seized him, as the egg-born Garuḍa might a serpent. Seizing the lord of the *rākṣasas*, who had been eager to seize him, the tawny monkey swiftly leapt up into the sky dangling him from his armpit. Although Rāvaṇa gouged him repeatedly with his nails, Vālin, crushing him tightly, carried him off, as the wind might a cloud.

[22–25] "Then, as ten-faced Rāvaṇa was being carried off, the fearsome ministers of the *rākṣasa*, wishing to free him, ran after him, crying out. Followed by them, Vālin, moving through the middle of the sky, was as radiant as the many-rayed sun high in the sky being followed by banks of

clouds. But those foremost among the *rākṣasas* were unable to keep up with Vālin, and, exhausted by the speed generated by his arms and haunches, they collapsed. For as Vālin was proceeding, even the lords of the mountains got out of his way.

[26–30] "The immensely swift lord of the monkeys, whose flight was impossible even for flocks of birds, performed his worship at the time of *sandhyā* at each of the oceans, one after another. Moving through the sky, the tawny monkey Vālin, honored by the creatures that move through the sky, came to the western ocean, still clutching Rāvaṇa. After performing the *sandhyā* rite there and having bathed and intoned the *mantras*, the monkey proceeded to the northern ocean, still carrying ten-faced Rāvaṇa. When he had performed the *sandhyā* rite at the northern ocean, Vālin proceeded to the great eastern receptacle of waters. When he had performed the *sandhyā* ritual there, Vāsavi, lord of the tawny monkeys, headed back to Kiṣkindhā, still clutching Rāvaṇa.

[31–32] "And thus, having performed the *sandhyā* ritual at all four oceans, the monkey, fatigued from carrying Rāvaṇa, landed in a parkland of Kiṣkindhā. The foremost of monkeys released Rāvaṇa from his armpit and, laughing at him, said, 'Where did you come from?'

[33–39] "Greatly astonished, his eyes rolling from exhaustion, the lord of the *rākṣasas* said these words to the lord of the tawny monkeys: 'I am Rāvaṇa, lord of the *rākṣasas*, O lord of monkeys—you who resemble great Indra. I came here eager for battle, and now you have overpowered me. Oh, what might! Oh, what power! Oh, what composure you have! For you have captured me as if I were some dumb beast and whirled me around the four oceans. O heroic monkey! What other hero, carrying me, could stride so swiftly in this fashion, without tiring? Indeed, other than you, leaping monkey, only three things possess such speed: thought, the wind, and Suparṇa. Of this, there is no doubt. Having witnessed your might, bull among tawny monkeys, I desire an enduring and affectionate alliance with you, one concluded in the presence of Agni, the purifier. Our wives, our sons, our cities, our kingdoms, our possessions, our garments, and our food—we shall share all these together, lord of the tawny monkeys.'

[40–42] "Then, after kindling a fire, the two of them—the tawny monkey and the *rākṣasa*—embraced each other and became as brothers. Then, hand in hand, delighted, the two of them—the tawny monkey and the

rākṣasa—entered Kiṣkindhā, as two lions might a mountain cave. And so Rāvaṇa dwelt there for a month as if he were Sugrīva, until he was taken away by his ministers, who had come and were eager to ravage the triple world.

[43–44] "This took place in this fashion long ago, lord, when Rāvaṇa was first overpowered by Vālin and then, in the presence of Agni, the purifier, was treated by him as his brother. Vālin's supreme might was unequaled, and yet, Rāma, you burned him as well, as might a fire, a moth."

Sarga 35

[1–7] Then Rāma once more questioned the sage who dwelt in the southern region. Cupping his hands in reverence, he humbly uttered these appropriate words: "The might of those two, Vālin and Rāvaṇa, was unequaled, but, in my opinion, they were not equal in heroic deeds to Hanumān. Heroism, skill, strength, steadfastness, wisdom, mastery of policy, valor, and power all reside in Hanumān. Back then, when he saw the ocean and the monkey army in despair, he reassured the monkeys once again and leapt one hundred leagues. After assaulting the citadel of Laṅkā and exploring Rāvaṇa's inner apartments, he spoke with Sītā and gained her confidence. And there Hanumān single-handedly slaughtered the generals of the army, the sons of the counselors, the servants, and Rāvaṇa's own son. And when he was once more free from his bonds, he conversed with ten-faced Rāvaṇa and then reduced Laṅkā to ashes, as a great purifying fire might the earth.

[8–13] "Those feats of Hanumān in battle are unheard of on the part of Kāla, Śakra, Viṣṇu, or Kubera, the guardian of wealth. For it was through the strength of his arms that I gained Laṅkā and victory and recovered Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, my kingdom, my friends, and my kinsmen. If I had not had Hanumān, the companion of the monkey lord, who would have been able to find out any word of Jānakī? Why then is it that when hostility broke out, he did not, out of a desire to serve Sugrīva, burn up Vālin, as if he were a mere creeper? Since he merely watched as the lord of the monkeys, as dear to him as life itself, was suffering, I guess that Hanumān did not know his own strength. Great and holy sage, you who are honored by the immortal gods, please tell me truthfully and in detail everything concerning Hanumān."

[14–18] Then, when the seer had heard Rāghava's reasonable words, he addressed to him these words, there in the presence of Hanumān: "What you say about Hanumān is true, foremost of the Raghus. There is none other who is his equal in might, speed, or intelligence. Long ago, some seers, whose curses never fail to take effect, cursed him such that, even though that crusher of his foes was mighty, he would not know his own strength. Because of its extreme childishness, I really ought not tell you, immensely powerful Rāma, what he did in his infancy. If, however, it is your intention to hear it, Rāma Rāghava, then concentrate your mind and listen as I tell you.

[19–21] "There is a mountain named Mount Sumeru, which is golden as the result of a boon granted by Sūrya. And it is there that Hanumān's father, Kesarin, ruled his kingdom. He had a beloved wife well known as Añjanā, and it was on her that Vāyu fathered an excellent son. Then that forest-roaming monkey Añjanā gave birth to a son, whose complexion was like that of rice awn. And one day she went out wishing to fetch some fruit.

[22–24] "As he was separated from his mother and greatly afflicted by hunger, the child cried loudly like a young king of the Śarabhas. Then he saw Vivasvant, the rising sun, which resembled a cluster of *japā* blossoms, and, in his longing for fruit, he leapt up toward it. Facing the rising sun, the child, who was himself like the rising sun incarnate, leapt up into the middle of the sky, wishing to seize the rising sun.

[25–27] "As the infant Hanumān was leaping up, the gods, *dānavas*, and perfected beings experienced tremendous astonishment. They said: 'Not even Vāyu, Garuḍa, or thought is as swift as this son of Vāyu, who is leaping across the highest heaven. If his speed and valor, even as a child, are such, what then will be his speed once he gains the strength of his prime?'

[28–30] "Now, as his son was leaping upward, Vāyu, as cold as a mass of snow, leapt after him, protecting him from the danger of being scorched by the sun. Through his father's power and in his own childishness, he then flew along many thousands of leagues into the sky, drawing near to the sun, bringer of light. However, the sun, maker of day, refrained from burning him, thinking, 'He is only a child, who doesn't know that this is wrong. Moreover, a great task will depend on him.'

[31–35] “Now on the very day on which he leapt up to seize the sun, bringer of light, Rāhu too desired to seize the sun, maker of day. But, O Rāma, when he was right over Sūrya’s chariot, Rāhu, tormentor of the moon and sun, was mauled by Hanumān and he fled, terrified. Furious, Rāhu, Siṃhikā’s son, went to Indra’s palace, and, knitting his brows, he addressed the god, who was surrounded by the hosts of gods: ‘Having given me the moon and the sun to allay my hunger, Vāsava, how is it that you have now given it to another, O slayer of Bala and Vṛtra? Today, as it was the time for an eclipse, I went to the sun to seize it, but suddenly, another Rāhu assaulted me and seized it.’

[36–38] “Upon hearing the words of Rāhu, Vāsava, in great agitation, left his throne and leapt up still wearing his golden garland. Then Indra mounted the four-tusked lord of elephants, which resembled a peak of Mount Kailāsa. It was streaming rut fluid, bearing ornaments, lofty, and loud with the sound of its golden bells. And placing Rāhu before him, he proceeded to the place where Sūrya and Hanumān were.

[39–41] “But leaving Vāsava behind, Rāhu went on ahead with tremendous speed. And Hanumān spied him as he raced toward him like a mountain peak. Seeing Rāhu like that, Hanumān then left the sun behind and once more leapt into the sky to seize Siṃhikā’s son. And, Rāma, seeing that the leaping monkey had left the sun behind and was racing toward him, Rāhu, who consists only of a head, turned around and took flight.

[42–43] “Hoping that Indra would protect him, the son of Siṃhikā, in his terror, cried out again and again, ‘Indra! Indra!’ Hearing the voice of Rāhu, who was crying out, and recognizing it even before seeing him, Indra said: ‘Do not fear! I will slay him.’

[44–46] “Now, when Māruti saw Airāvata, he thought, ‘This one is a really big fruit!’ and he rushed toward that king of elephants. Then, as he rushed onward in his desire to seize Airāvata, his appearance became momentarily fearsome and as radiant as that of Indra or Agni. As he was rushing onward in this fashion, Śacī’s lord, only slightly angered, struck him with his *vajra*, which he loosed from the tips of his fingers.

[47–49] “Struck by Indra’s *vajra*, he fell on a mountain. And as he fell, his jaw [*hanu*] was broken on the left side. But when that child had fallen, stunned by the blow of the *vajra*, Pavana was enraged at Indra, who had injured his son. Closing off the organs of defecation and urination, the lord

who moves within all creatures blocked up all beings, as Vāsava might the rains.

[50–52] "Because of Vāyu's wrath, beings were completely deprived of breath, and, bursting at the seams, they became like blocks of wood. Deprived of the cries of '*svadhā*' and '*vaṣaṭ*,' devoid of all ritual performance, and, indeed, stripped of all righteous practices through the wrath of Vāyu, the triple world seemed to be in hell. Then, afflicted with misery, all creatures, including the *gandharvas*, the gods, the *asuras*, and humans, ran to Prajāpati, seeking relief.

[53–56] "Cupping their hands in supplication, the gods, whose bellies were as bulbous as conch shells, said: 'Blessed lord of creatures, you created the four types of beings. Foremost of beings, you gave us Pavana to be the lord of our lives. Why then, since he is the lord of life, has he blocked us up, causing us pain as if we were women in the inner apartments? Therefore, stricken by Vāyu, we have come to you, O lord, for refuge. Please, slayer of your enemies, take away this suffering of ours caused by the blockage of wind.'

[57–63] "When Prajāpati, the lord of creatures, had heard these words of the creatures, he said to them, 'This has happened for a reason.' And then once more he addressed those creatures: 'Listen, O creatures, to the reason for which Vāyu grew angry and blocked you up. You must patiently hear all this for yourselves. His son was struck down today by King Indra, lord of the immortal gods, who acted on the words of Rāhu, and so Anila, the wind god, grew angry at you. Bodiless, Vāyu moves within all bodies, protecting them; for, without Vāyu, the body becomes nothing but dust. Vāyu is the breath of life. Vāyu is happiness. This whole world is Vāyu. Abandoned by Vāyu, the world can find no happiness. And today the world has been abandoned by Vāyu, the life of the world. Today all these creatures, deprived of their breath, stand here motionless like logs or walls. So then let us go to where Māruta, the cause of your affliction, is staying. Let us not court destruction by failing to propitiate the son of Aditi.'

[64–65] "Then Prajāpati, along with the creatures and together with the gods, *gandharvas*, great serpents, and *guhyakas*, went to where Māruta was staying, after he had taken his son, who had been struck down by the lord of the gods. There on the lap of ever-moving Vāyu lay his son, as radiant as the sun, Agni Vaiśvānara, or gold. When four-faced Brahmā, together with

the gods, perfected beings, seers, great serpents, and the *rākṣasas*, saw him, he was filled with pity."

Sarga 36

[1–4] "When Vāyu, who was distressed at the injury to his son, saw Grandfather Brahmā, he stood up before the Creator, holding his infant son. After rising, with his dangling earrings, garland, diadem, and ornaments of burnished gold, Vāyu prostrated himself three times at the Creator's feet. The primordial knower of the *vedas* caused Vāyu to rise, and he stroked his infant son with a hand that was adorned with hanging ornaments. And no sooner had he been touched as if in play by lotus-born Brahmā than he once more revived, as might crops sprinkled with water.

[5–6] "Perceiving with delight that Hanumān had revived, Vāyu, bearer of scents and the breath of life, began to circulate among all beings, where there had previously been obstruction. Released from the affliction of wind, creatures were as delighted as might be lotus ponds in bloom freed from freezing winds.

[7–9] "Then Brahmā of the three pairs, foremost of the three, who has three abodes and is worshiped by the thirty gods, addressed the gods out of a desire to do a kindness to Māruta: 'O great Indra! O Agni! O Varuṇa! O Kubera, lord of wealth! O Maheśvara! Please listen. Although you know all this, I shall tell it, as it is beneficial. This infant will have to accomplish a mission of yours. So you must all grant Māruta boons in order to gratify him.'

[10–15] "Then thousand-eyed Indra, moved by affection and with a benign expression, took off his garland of lotuses and said this: 'In that his jaw [*hanu*] was broken by the *vajra* loosed from my hand, this tiger among monkeys shall be known by the name of Hanumān, "He of the Powerful Jaw." And I will grant him the greatest and most excellent boon. Henceforward, he shall be invulnerable to my *vajra*.' Then the blessed Sūrya Mārtāṇḍa, dispeller of darkness, said: 'I shall give him a hundredth portion of my blazing energy. And when he is able to study the *śāstras*, I shall grant him mastery of that *śāstra* by means of which he shall become eloquent.' Next Varuṇa gave him a boon: 'His death shall never come about through my noose or through water, even after a million years.'

[16–21] “And Yama, being pleased, ordained for him invulnerability to his rod, perpetual freedom from disease, and the boon of never losing heart in battle. Then Kubera Ekākṣipiñgala, who was a granter of boons, spoke thus: ‘This mace of mine shall never kill him in battles.’ And Śañkara granted him the greatest boon, saying, ‘His death shall never come from me or from my weapons.’ Next Brahmā said these words: ‘He will be a great being, long-lived, and immune to all chastisements on the part of brahmans.’ Then very wise Viśvakarman, foremost of artisans, gazing at that infant, who resembled the rising sun, uttered a boon for him: ‘And he will be invulnerable at the time of battle to whatever weapons of the gods I have fashioned here.’

[22–24] “Then, seeing Hanumān adorned with the boons of the gods, four-faced Brahmā, *guru* of the world, with a satisfied expression, said to Vāyu: ‘O Māruta, your son here, Māruti, shall bring fear to his enemies and freedom from fear to his friends. He shall be invincible. And he shall perform hair-raising feats in battle for the destruction of Rāvaṇa and the delight of Rāma.’

[25–26] “When all of those gods had spoken in this fashion and had taken leave of Māruta, they placed Grandfather Brahmā before them, and, along with the other immortals, they all departed just as they had come. But as for Vāyu, the bearer of scents, he took his son and brought him home. Then, after telling Añjanā about the boons that had been granted, he departed.

[27–31] “Now, Rāma, when Hanumān had acquired these boons, he was filled with strength from their having been granted, and, with his native strength, he swelled up like the ocean. Indeed, filled with strength, that bull among monkeys fearlessly committed offenses in the ashrams of the great seers. He broke the sacrificial ladles, smashed the ritual vessels, and scattered the *agnihotra* fire and the piles of barkcloth garments belonging to those tranquil sages. Knowing that Brahmā had granted him immunity from all chastisements on the part of the brahmans, the seers continued to tolerate this. Even when Kesarin and Vāyu, together with Añjanā, tried to restrain him, the monkey continued to transgress all bounds.

[32–34] “Then, foremost among the Raghus, those great seers, born in the lineage of the Bhṛgus and the Añgirasas, were annoyed, but not excessively wrathful or impatient. Still they cursed him: ‘Befuddled by our

curse, leaping monkey, you shall for a very long time be unaware of your strength, relying on which you have been annoying us.' As he was thus forced to forget his power and blazing energy through the force of the great seers' words, he took on a gentle nature, roaming the ashrams without violating them.

[35–37] "At that time, the father of Vālin and Sugrīva, named Ṛkṣarajas, was the king of all the monkeys, and he was like the sun, bringer of light, in his blazing energy. After that lord of the tawny monkeys, whose name was Ṛkṣarajas, had ruled over the monkeys for a long time, he succumbed to the rule of time. When he had passed away, the counselors, who were expert in counsel, set Vālin as king in his father's place and Sugrīva in that of Vālin.

[38–40] "And between Hanumān and Sugrīva there was an unbreakable friendship, indivisible, and free from any breach, just as there is between wind and fire. But because of the force of the curse, Rāma, when the hostility arose between Vālin and Sugrīva, Hanumān did not realize his own strength. And, Rāma, even when Sugrīva was being driven out by Vālin, he did not remind him. Nor did Māruti know his own strength.

[41–42] "Who in this world excels Hanumān in valor, energy, intelligence, prowess, morality, kindness, political sense, dignity, cleverness, great strength, and fortitude? Long ago this foremost of monkeys, immeasurable and eager to learn grammar, faced the sun and, following it, walked from the eastern to the western mountain and so mastered that great subject.

[43–44] "Who will stand before Hanumān, who, like the ocean, is eager to inundate the world, like Agni, the purifier, eager to consume all the worlds, and like Yama, the ender of all things, at the times of universal destruction? He himself as well as these other great monkey lords, Sugrīva, Mainda, Dvivida, Nīla, Tāra, Tārā's son, Nala, and Rambha, were created by the gods on your behalf, Rāma.

[45–46] "Thus, I have now told you everything about which you asked me. I have told you about the deeds of Hanumān in his childhood. Having seen and conversed with you, Rāma, we must now depart." Having spoken in this fashion, all the seers departed as they had come.

[Interpolated Passage II follows *sarga* 36; see PVR 7: 1305–18]

Sarga 37

[1–4] After this, Rāma first caressed and then embraced his fearless friend Pratardana, the lord of Kāśi, and said this: “You, sir, have demonstrated the greatest affection and the highest friendship. And, your majesty, Bharata made great preparations in tandem with you. So, this very day, sir, you must go to the city you protect, that beautiful city in the country of Kāśī, Vārāṇasī, with its splendid palisades and lovely gateways.” When he had said this much, righteous Kākutstha rose from his splendid throne and held him closely to his chest.

[5–10] After he had dismissed his friend, Rāghava, smiling, addressed this sweet-syllabled speech to the lords of the earth, who had come willingly: “Through your strength of character, you gentlemen have maintained your unshakable affection for me. Your righteousness is ever unwavering, and you are always true. And it was through the might and blazing energy of you great kings that the evil and evil-minded lord of the *rākṣasas* was slain. It was through the blazing energy of you gentlemen that Rāvaṇa, together with his hosts, his sons, and his kinsmen, was slain in battle. I was merely the proximate cause of that. It was great Bharata who assembled you gentlemen upon hearing that Janaka’s daughter had been abducted in the wilderness. A very long time passed while all you great kings were here making preparations. Now you must resolve to depart.”

[11–14] Filled with the greatest delight, the kings replied to him: “Thank heavens you have been victorious, Rāma, and your reign has been established! Thank heavens Sītā has been recovered! Thank heavens your enemy has been vanquished! This was our greatest desire, and this is our greatest glory, in that we see you, Rāma, victorious, after having slain your enemies. And how like you, Kākutstha, that you praise us. For only those worthy of praise know how to utter praise such as this. Let us now take our leave and depart. But you, sir, will always remain in our hearts. And, great king, may your affection for us endure forever.”

Sarga 38

[1–2] Shaking the earth, those great and heroic kings delightedly departed in all directions for their own cities. And so all of them who had come for Rāghava’s sake returned home in delight, accompanied by many thousands of armies.

[3–6] But those protectors of the earth, filled with the pride of their might, said: “We never got to see Rāvaṇa standing before us in battle. Bharata assembled us belatedly and to no purpose. For otherwise, we kings would have doubtless slain the *rākṣasas* there. For protected by the might of Rāma’s arm and Lakṣmaṇa’s too, we would have happily fought without a care on the far shore of the sea.” Discussing these and thousands of other matters, those kings, great chariot-warriors, entered their own kingdoms.

[7–10] Once they had gone each to their own city, those kings, acting on their desire to please Rāma, presented as gifts for him various precious things, as well as horses, jewels, garments, rutting elephants, heavenly sandalwood, and heavenly ornaments. Taking those precious things, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, and the great chariot-warrior Śatrughna returned to Ayodhyā. And when those bulls among men returned to the charming city of Ayodhyā, they gave all those precious things to great Rāghava.

[11–14] Rāghava, filled with delight, accepted all of that and then gave everything to the great Sugrīva. And he also made gifts to Vibhīṣaṇa. As for those other heroic apes and monkeys, starting with Hanumān, as well as the immensely powerful *rākṣasas*, all of them, immensely powerful and with delighted hearts, placed Rāma’s gifts on their heads and arms. And they drank various fragrant honey-wines and feasted on fruits and well-dressed meats.

[15–17] While they were dwelling there, a month and more went by, but, because of their devotion to Rāma, it all seemed to pass in a moment. As for Rāma, he delighted in the company of the monkeys, who could take on any form at will, the immensely powerful kings, and the immensely mighty *rākṣasas*. In this way, the second month of the cold season passed pleasantly for all those delighted monkeys and *rākṣasas*.

Sarga 39

[1–7] While the apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas* were living there in this manner, Rāghava, of immense blazing energy, said this to Sugrīva: “My dear friend, you must go now to Kiṣkindhā, which is unassailable even by the gods and *asuras*. For together with your ministers, you must guard your sovereignty, the threats to which have been eliminated. And, great-armed warrior, as you look upon Aṅgada, as well as Hanumān and the immensely powerful Nala, you must be filled with the greatest affection. Similarly, you

must look with affection upon your father-in-law, the hero Suṣeṇa, Tāra foremost among the mighty, unassailable Kumuda, immensely powerful Nīla, the hero Śatabali, Mainda, Dvivida, Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, immensely powerful Śarabha, the immensely powerful and unassailable king of the apes Jāmbavān, and Gandhamādana as well. And as for those other very great monkeys who were ready to lay down their lives for my sake, you must also look upon them with affection, and you must do nothing to offend them."

[8–11] When Rāma had addressed Sugrīva in this fashion and praised him again and again, he addressed Vibhīṣaṇa in a sweet voice: "You must rule Laṅkā righteously, O king, for you are held in high esteem by the *rākṣasas* of that city and by your brother Vaiśravaṇa. And you must not in any way set your mind on unrighteousness; for wise kings rule securely. And, your majesty, may you always remember Sugrīva and me with the greatest affection. You may go now, free from any anxiety."

[12–13] When the apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas* had heard Rāma's speech, they cried, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" and praised Kākutstha again and again. "O great-armed Rāma, your intelligence, amazing valor, and extreme sweetness are always just like those of self-existent Brahmā."

[14–16] While the monkeys and the *rākṣasas* were speaking in this fashion, Hanumān, prostrating himself, spoke these words to Rāghava: "May my highest love, your majesty, always be fixed on you. And, hero, may my devotion be constant. May this affection never attach itself to anyone else. And, O hero, may my life breaths undoubtedly remain in my body as long as I shall hear on earth the tale of Rāma."

[17–19] Then, even as Hanumān was speaking in this fashion, that best of kings rose from his throne and, embracing him, spoke these words: "All of this shall come to pass, best of monkeys, of this there is no doubt. As long as the worlds shall endure, so shall my tale. As long as this tale of mine shall circulate throughout the worlds, so long will the breaths of life remain in your body. Of this there is no doubt."

[20–21] Then, removing from his neck his pearl necklace, which with its central gem of lapis lazuli shone like the moon, Rāghava lovingly fastened it on Hanumān. With the pearl necklace fastened on his chest, that great monkey was as resplendent as the golden lord of mountains with the moon rising over its peak.

[22–24] And when those immensely powerful monkeys had heard Rāghava's speech, they rose one after the other, and, after prostrating themselves with their heads at his feet, they departed. After this, Rāma embraced great-armed Sugrīva, and then he pressed righteous Vibhīṣaṇa close to his chest. All of them had their throats choked with tears and their eyes too were filled with tears. Distracted, as if fainting with grief, they then left Rāghava.

Sarga 40

[1–4] Once the joyous, great-armed Rāma had dismissed the apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*, he rejoiced happily together with his brothers. In the afternoon Rāghava, together with his brothers, heard sweet words that were spoken from the sky: "Gentle Rāma, please look upon me with a gentle countenance. Know, O lord, that I am the Puṣpaka, who has come from the summit of Mount Kailāsa. After receiving your command, I went back to Kubera, the bestower of wealth. And he, O best of men, told me to wait upon you, saying:

[5–9] " 'You were won by the great Rāghava, the lord of men, after he had slain in battle Rāvaṇa, the unassailable lord of the *rākṣasas*. And I too, gentle one, experienced the greatest delight when the evil-minded Rāvaṇa was slain, along with his hosts, his sons, his ministers, and his kinsmen. You were won in Laṅkā by Rāma, who is the Supreme Spirit. And thus, I command you, "Gentle one, you must carry him." It is my greatest desire that you should carry the delight of the Raghus on his journeys through the world. So go, free from any anxiety.' Having received that command of great Kubera, the bestower of wealth, I have returned once again to your side. Therefore, please accept me."

[10–11] And saying, "So be it!" Kākutstha worshiped the Puṣpaka with parched grain, unhusked rice, flowers, and extremely fragrant perfumes, saying: "Now you may depart as you wish. But you must return whenever I call you to mind." Then, having said, "May it be so!" the Puṣpaka was dismissed once again by Rāma. Adorned with flowers, the Puṣpaka departed in the direction of its choice.

[12–17] When the varicolored Puṣpaka had vanished in this fashion, Bharata, cupping his hands in reverence, spoke these words to the delight of the Raghus: "Extraordinary things are seen when you are ruling the

kingdom. Again and again nonhuman creatures are speaking. More than a month has passed since there was any illness among the people, and death has not befallen even the aged creatures, Rāghava. Women are giving birth to sons, and men have splendid bodies. Joy abounds among the people who dwell in the city. At the proper time, Vāsava sends down rain that is like the nectar of immortality. And the winds blow softly to the touch, giving pleasure. And, lord of men, the people in the city and the folk in the countryside say, 'May such a king be ours forever.' "

[18] When Rāma had heard those extremely sweet words that Bharata had uttered, he was filled with delight, and, joyous, he rejoiced happily.

Sarga 41

[1–6] Once great-armed Rāma had dismissed the golden Puṣpaka, he entered the *aśoka* grove. It was adorned on every side with sandalwood trees, aloe trees, mangoes, *tuṅgas*, *kāleyakas*, and stands of *devadārus*. It was filled with *kurabaka* shrubs, as well as with *priyaṅgu*, *kadamba*, *jambū*, *pāṭalī*, and *kovidāra* trees. It was always adorned with delightful blossoms and charming fruit trees, which were filled with beautiful buds and blossoms and swarming with intoxicated black bees. And it was also adorned with *kokilas* and hundreds of bumblebees and many-colored birds, which served as the variegated ornaments of the mango trees. Some of the trees there shone like gold, some resembled flames of fire, while others were as dark as black collyrium.

[7–10] And there were pools of various shapes, filled with crystalline water. Their steps were made of precious gems and their floors were inlaid with crystal. They had dense clusters of blooming red and blue lotuses, and they were adorned with *cakravākas*. They were also adorned with enclosures of various shapes and with stone benches. Here and there, in the forested areas, they were richly endowed with glades that resembled emeralds, and they were surrounded by flowering trees. The appearance of Rāma's grove, which he had created, was just like that of Indra's Nandana garden and like that of Kubera's Caitraratha garden, which Brahmā had created.

[11–16] The delight of the Raghus entered that luxuriant *aśoka* grove, which was endowed with many seats and dwellings and was filled with bowers of creepers. And he sat down on a beautifully formed seat, adorned

with bunches of flowers and furnished with a covering of carpets. Taking Sītā in his arms, Kākutstha gave her excellent, sweet *maireya* wine to drink, just as Indra might give the nectar of immortality to Śacī. Servants then quickly brought various meats and different fruits for Rāma's meal. And beautiful, inebriated young women, skilled in dancing and singing, danced before the king. In this fashion, filled with joy, Rāma, like a god, delighted Sītā, the lovely princess of Videha, day after day.

[17–20] While great Rāghava, foremost of men, was enjoying himself in this fashion, the pleasant winter season passed. After that knower of righteousness had righteously discharged his duties to the people of the city in the morning, he would spend the remaining half of the day in the inner apartments. And as for Sītā, after discharging her morning obligations to the gods, she would stand, cupping her hands in reverence without distinction, before all of her mothers-in-law. After that, adorned with exquisite and abundant jewelry, she would go to Rāma, just as Śacī might go to thousand-eyed Indra when he is seated in his heaven Triviṣṭapa.

[21–22] Now one day, seeing that his wife was endowed with an auspicious glow, Rāghava experienced unparalleled delight, and he cried: "Wonderful! Wonderful! The acquisition of a child is at hand for me, Vaidehī. So what do you desire? Tell me, what desire of yours must be fulfilled?"

[23–25] Smiling, Vaidehī then said these words to Rāma: "Heroic Rāghava, I should like to see the holy penance groves that are located on the bank of the Ganges so that I may spend some time at the feet of the seers of holy deeds, who live on fruits and roots. It is my greatest desire, Kākutstha, that I might spend even a single night among those holy sages, who subsist on roots and fruits."

[26–27] And saying, "So be it!" Rāma, tireless in action, promised, "Rest assured, Vaidehī, tomorrow you shall go without a doubt." When Rāma Kākutstha had spoken in this fashion to Janaka's daughter Maithilī, he went off to another inner chamber, surrounded by his friends.

Sarga 42

[1–3] Once the king was seated there, amusing conversationalists, skillful in many types of discourse, attended him on every side. Vijaya, Madhumatta, Kāśyapa, Piṅgala, Kuśa, Surāji, Kāliya, Bhadra, Dantavakra, Samāgadha—

all in high spirits—jokingly told great Rāghava many different kinds of stories.

[4–6] Then, during one story, Rāghava said: “Bhadra, what are people talking about in the city and provinces? What are the people of the city and the countryside saying about me? And what about Sītā and Bharata, and what indeed of Lakṣmaṇa? And what about Śatrughna and my mother Kaikeyī? For at the beginning of a reign, the royalty must certainly be talked about.”

[7–8] When Rāma had spoken in this fashion, Bhadra replied, his hands cupped in reverence: “The comments of the residents of the city are consistently favorable, your majesty. But, gentle sir, it is the victory in connection with the slaying of ten-necked Rāvaṇa that is mostly talked about in your city, bull among men.”

[9–11] Addressed in this fashion by Bhadra, Rāghava spoke these words: “You must tell me everything, truthfully, leaving out nothing. Once I hear what the residents of the city say is good and what is bad, I will continue the good and not perpetuate the bad. You must tell me confidently, without fear and without anxiety, just what the people of the city and folk in the countryside are saying.”

[12–13] Addressed in this fashion by Rāghava, Bhadra, his mind composed, cupping his hands in reverence, replied to great-armed Rāma in these well-chosen words: “Listen, your majesty, to what the people are saying—at the crossroads, in the markets, on the highways, and in the parks and woodlands—about what is good and what is bad. They say:

[14–20] “ ‘Rāma accomplished the all-but-impossible bridging of the ocean, which no one—not even the gods and *dānavas* together—had ever done before. Thus, he slew unassailable Rāvaṇa, along with his troops and his mounts, and brought the monkeys and apes, along with the *rākṣasas*, under his sway. But then, after having slain Rāvaṇa in battle and having recovered Sītā, Rāghava put his anger behind him and brought her back once more into his own house. What sort of pleasure could be produced in his heart through the enjoyment of Sītā, since earlier Rāvaṇa, clutching her to his side, had forcibly carried her off to Laṅkā? And how can Rāma not despise her who was taken to Laṅkā and, what is more, placed in the *aśoka* grove under the control of the *rākṣasas*? Now we shall have to put up with this from our own wives as well. For people always follow what the king

does.’ And that, your majesty, is what—in many different ways—the city residents are saying in all the cities and provinces.”

[21–23] When Rāghava had heard this speech of his, he was deeply pained, and he addressed all his friends, saying, “What about this? You must tell me.” And they all saluted him, bowing with their heads to the ground, and replied to the despondent Rāghava, “This is how it is, there is no doubt.” When Kākutstha had heard the words that all of them had spoken, that slayer of his foes then dismissed them all.

Sarga 43

[1–2] And once Rāghava had dismissed the circle of his friends, he took a resolution in his mind and then spoke these words to the doorkeeper who sat nearby: “Quickly bring Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri of auspicious marks, as well as great-armed Bharata and invincible Śatrughna.”

[3–5] When the doorkeeper, his hands cupped reverentially at his head, had heard Rāma’s words, he went to Lakṣmaṇa’s dwelling and entered unhindered. And then, after glorifying Lakṣmaṇa, he spoke these words, with his hands cupped in reverence: “The king wishes to see you. You must go there without delay.” Upon hearing Rāghava’s command, Saumitri mounted his chariot with the words, “So be it!” and hastened to Rāghava’s residence.

[6–7] When the doorkeeper had seen Lakṣmaṇa departing, he went into the presence of Bharata and, cupping his hands in reverence, spoke these words: “The king wishes to see you.” Now, when Bharata had heard from the doorkeeper the words that Rāma had uttered, he swiftly leapt up from his seat and departed from there on foot.

[8–10] When the doorkeeper had seen Bharata departing, he went swiftly to Śatrughna’s mansion, his hands cupped in reverence. He then said these words: “Come! Come along, best of the Raghus! The king wishes to see you. For Lakṣmaṇa has already gone and so has illustrious Bharata.” When Śatrughna had heard the doorkeeper’s words, he acknowledged Rāma’s command by bowing his head to the ground, and then he went to where Rāghava was.

[11–13] Upon hearing that the princes had arrived, Rāma, his senses disordered through constant brooding, his head sunk, and his mind distressed, said these words to the doorkeeper: “You must quickly have the

princes enter my presence. For my life depends on them. They are indeed my life breaths outside my body." And when they were thus commanded by the lord of men, the princes, clad in white garments, bowing and cupping their hands in reverence, entered together.

[14–16] They saw that wise Rāma's face was like the hare-marked moon dimmed by an eclipse and that it was as devoid of its radiance as is the sun at twilight. They saw that his eyes were filled with tears and they observed that his face was like a lotus robbed of its splendor. Then, after immediately and reverently honoring Rāma's feet with their heads, they all stood there together, while Rāma continued to shed tears.

[17–19] Embracing them with his arms, great-armed Rāma had them rise, and, telling them, "Please take your seats," he then said these words: "You gentlemen are everything to me. You gentlemen are my life. Lords of men, you have created the kingdom that I rule. You gentlemen are well grounded in the meaning of the *śāstras*, and you are highly advanced in intelligence. Lords of men, there is a concern of mine that, upon reflection, must be considered."

Sarga 44

[1–5] As they all sat there, their minds distressed, Kākutstha, his mouth gone dry, spoke these words: "Bless you, you must all hear the sort of talk that is circulating among the people of the city regarding Sītā and me and do not think of objecting to it. There is severe criticism on the part of the people of the city as well as of the countryside. There is disgust directed toward me, and it pierces me to the vitals. I have, as is well known, been born into the House of the great Ikṣvākus. How then could I have brought Sītā, whose conduct has been sinful, back into the city? For you know, gentle brother, how Sītā was abducted by Rāvaṇa in the deserted Daṇḍaka wilderness and how he was slain by me.

[6–9] "Right before your eyes, Saumitri, and those of the gods, Agni, bearer of oblations, as well as Vāyu, who moves through the sky, declared Maithilī to be innocent. And back then, in the presence of the gods and all the seers, the moon and the sun extolled Janaka's daughter as innocent. And thus, on the island of Lañkā, in the presence of the gods and *gandharvas*, that woman of blameless conduct was handed over to me by great Indra.

And in my heart of hearts I knew that illustrious Sītā was pure. So then, taking Vaidehī, I came to Ayodhyā.

[10–12] "But now there is this grave allegation against me, and there is sorrow in my heart. There is severe criticism on the part of the people of the city as well as of the countryside. Any person whose infamy is bruited about among the people falls into the lowest hells so long as that gossip is repeated. For infamy is condemned by the gods, while fame is honored among them. And every undertaking of the great is made for the sake of fame.

[13–14] "Moreover, alarmed by the fear of criticism, I would abandon my life itself, or even you, bulls among men. what to say of Janaka's daughter. That is why you gentlemen have been forced to see me fallen into an ocean of sorrow. Moreover, I cannot imagine any agony greater than this.

[15–17] "Tomorrow at daybreak, Saumitri, you must mount a carriage driven by Sumantra, and, after helping Sītā to get in, you are to abandon her at the border of the realm. On the far side of the Ganges lies the ashram of the very great Vālmīki. It is heavenly in its appearance, and it is situated on the banks of the Tamasā River. And once you have abandoned her there, O delight of the Raghus, in a desolate wood, you must quickly return. Saumitri, you must carry out my instructions.

[18–22] "Nor must I be contradicted in any way with regard to Sītā. For if I were to be opposed, it would give rise to my most extreme displeasure. I bind you to an oath, swearing by my arms and my life, you who might speak in the midst of my words in an effort somehow to conciliate me. If you gentlemen are obedient to my commands, then you must respect me. This very day Sītā must be taken away from here. You must carry out my instructions. Earlier she told me, 'I should like to see the great ashrams on the banks of the Ganges.' So now let her wish be fulfilled." When righteous Kākutstha, his eyes filled with tears, had spoken in this fashion, surrounded by his brothers, he went inside.

Sarga 45

[1–3] Then, when the night had given way to dawn, Lakṣmaṇa, his mind distressed and his mouth gone dry, spoke these words to Sumantra: "Charioteer, quickly yoke horses to a fine carriage and bring a beautiful, well-covered seat from the king's palace for Sītā. For I am to take Sītā from

the king's palace to the ashram of the great seers of holy deeds. So bring the carriage quickly."

[4–7] Saying, "So be it!" Sumantra brought an exquisitely beautiful carriage, well furnished with comfortable seating and yoked with splendid horses, and he said to Saumitri, the increaser of his friends' joy, "The carriage is here, please do what you must do, lord." Addressed in this fashion by Sumantra, Lakṣmaṇa, that bull among men, entered the king's residence and, approaching Sītā, said: "On the orders of our king, my lady, I am to go quickly to the bank of the Ganges and take you to the lovely ashram of the sages."

[8–10] Addressed in this fashion by great Lakṣmaṇa, Vaidehī experienced unequaled joy, for she was delighted to go. Gathering costly garments and various precious things, Vaidehī prepared to depart, saying, "I shall give these ornaments to the sages' wives." And saying, "So be it!" Saumitri had Maithilī mount the carriage, and he then set forth with swift horses, keeping Rāma's command in mind.

[11–16] Then Sītā said to Lakṣmaṇa, the increaser of prosperity: "Today, delight of the Raghus, I see many inauspicious signs. Today my eye is throbbing and a trembling has arisen in my limbs. Also, Saumitri, my heart seems ill at ease. I feel the greatest anxiety and a great faintheartedness seizes me. And, wide-eyed prince, I see the earth as if it were desolate. May all be well with your brother, together with his brothers, and also with all my mothers-in-law without distinction, heroic prince. And may all be well with all the living things in the city and countryside." Thus did Sītā pray to the gods, her hands folded in reverence. But Lakṣmaṇa, aware of the real state of affairs, bowed his head to Maithilī and, feigning happiness, though his heart was deeply pained, said, "All is well."

[17–20] Then, after reaching a place to stay in an ashram on the banks of the Gomatī, Saumitri once again arose in the morning and addressed the charioteer, "Yoke the carriage quickly! For today, I would place the waters of the Bhāgīrathī on my head, just as did three-eyed Śiva on the mountain." After he had quickly exercised the horses, which were as swift as thought, and yoked them to the carriage, the charioteer, cupping his hands in reverence, said to Vaidehī, "Please mount." And on his instructions, Sītā mounted that splendid carriage together with Saumitri and the wise charioteer Sumantra.

[21–27] After traveling for half a day, Lakṣmaṇa spied the waters of the Bhāgīrathī and, deeply despondent, wept loudly. And Sītā, deeply concerned, seeing that Lakṣmaṇa was suffering, spoke these words: "Knower of righteousness, what is it? Why are you crying? Now that we have reached the banks of the Jāhnavī, which I have longed for all this time, why, at the moment of my joy, are you making me sad? You always abide at Rāma's feet, bull among men. Is it that you are sorrowful at being separated from him for two nights? Rāma is as dear as life itself to me as well, Lakṣmaṇa, but I am not grieving in this way. Please do not be so childish. Take me across the Ganges and let me see the ascetics. Then I shall distribute the wealth, garments, and ornaments. Then, once we have made our respectful salutations to the great seers according to their merit, we will spend one night there and then return to the city."

[28] When Lakṣmaṇa had heard those words of hers, he wiped his lovely eyes and, intent on crossing the Ganges, had a lovely boat brought up.

Sarga 46

[1–2] After first helping Maithilī board the very large and fully rigged boat of the Niṣādas, the younger brother of Rāghava boarded himself. Lakṣmaṇa told Sumantra, who had the carriage with him, "Please remain here," and then, tormented with grief, he told the boatman, "Cast off."

[3–6] When they had reached the farther bank of the Bhāgīrathī, Lakṣmaṇa, cupping his hands in reverence, spoke these words to Maithilī, his voice choked with tears: "Vaidehī, it is as if there were a massive dart through my heart in that my wise and noble brother has in this matter made me an object of censure for the world. Death would be better for me today, or what would be still better than death would be if I were not to be enjoined to such a task that is condemned by all the world. Forgive me and please do not be angry with me, woman of excellent vows." Having said this, Lakṣmaṇa cupped his hands in reverence and fell to the ground.

[7–9] Now, when Maithilī saw Lakṣmaṇa weeping with his hands cupped in reverence and wishing for his own death, she was greatly alarmed and said these words to him: "What is this? I do not understand. Tell me truthfully, Lakṣmaṇa. I see that you are distraught. Is all well with the lord of the earth? You must have been compelled to take an oath by the lord of men. Tell me, here and now, about this anguish of yours. I command you."

[10–13] Prodded by Vaidehī, Lakṣmaṇa, his mind distressed, his face downcast, and his throat choked with tears, spoke these words: “Daughter of Janaka, in the middle of his assembly the king heard vile rumors about you that are current in the city and the countryside. I cannot repeat those things before you, my lady, those things that the king has lodged in his heart. All anger has been set aside. Although you were shown to be innocent in my presence, you have been abandoned by the lord of men, who is fearful of the criticism of the people. You should not understand it in any other way, my lady.

[14–18] “And so, taking cognizance of the king’s command as well as your reported pregnancy-longing in this regard, I will have to abandon you on the outskirts of the ashram. Here, on the bank of the Jāhnavī, is the ascetic grove of the brahman-seers. It is holy and beautiful, so you should not be despondent, lovely lady. Vālmīki, that extremely illustrious brahman and bull among sages, was the greatest friend of my father, Daśaratha. Resorting to the shade of the feet of that great sage, you must dwell here happily, daughter of Janaka, devoted to fasting, your mind composed. Living the life of a completely devoted wife and holding Rāma always in your heart—conducting yourself in this way—you will attain the greatest happiness, my lady.”

Sarga 47

[1–2] When Janaka’s daughter Vaidehī had heard those terrible words of Lakṣmaṇa, she was devastated and she collapsed. Unconscious for a short while, Janaka’s daughter, her eyes filled with tears, addressed Lakṣmaṇa with sorrowful words:

[3–7] “Surely, Lakṣmaṇa, this body of mine, which is now seen to be a veritable incarnation of suffering, must have been created by the creator for suffering alone. What sin did I commit previously, or whom did I separate from his wife, that I—a virtuous wife of blameless conduct—have been abandoned by the lord of the earth? Earlier I dwelt in an ashram following Rāma’s footsteps, and, Saumitri, living with that hardship, I endured it. How, dear boy, am I to live in an ashram cut off from everyone? And to whom, given over as I am to sorrow, am I to tell my sorrows? And what will I say to the sages when they ask what wrong I have done to the king and for what reason great Rāghava has abandoned me?

[8–10] “And by no means, Saumitri, can I abandon my life this very day in the waters of the Jāhnavī, for then my husband’s royal lineage would be cut off. You must do as you are ordered, Saumitri. Leave me, whose lot is misery. You must abide by the instructions of the king. But hear my words. First, with your hands extended and cupped in reverence, and your head affectionately bowed to the feet of my mothers-in-law without distinction, you must inquire after the well-being of the king, saying:

[11–12] “ ‘You must always act toward the people just as you do toward your brothers. For this would be the greatest righteousness and this would be your unsurpassed glory. I do not grieve for my own body, bull among men. But, your majesty, you must act righteously toward the people in such a way that you avoid their criticism, O delight of the Raghus.’ ”

[13–16] As Sītā was speaking in this fashion, Lakṣmaṇa, his mind distressed, bowed his head to the ground and was unable to speak. Then, after making a respectful circumambulation, he once more boarded the boat, and, weeping loudly, he urged on the boatman. Crushed under a great burden of grief, he reached the northern bank and quickly mounted the carriage, almost unconscious in his misery. Lakṣmaṇa then set forth, turning around again and again to gaze at Sītā, who, like a woman without a protector, was clutching herself on the farther bank.

[17–18] She gazed again and again at the distant carriage and at Lakṣmaṇa, and as she watched, terrified, grief overwhelmed her. Bowed down under the burden of her suffering, the virtuous and illustrious woman, not seeing anyone to protect her, now wretched and given over to her suffering, wept loudly in the woods, which resounded with the cries of peacocks.

Sarga 48

[1–4] Seeing Sītā crying, the sages’ sons, who were nearby, ran to where the holy Vālmīki of profound intellect was staying. After reverently honoring the sage’s feet, the sons of the sages all informed that great seer about the sound of her weeping. “Holy one, a woman such as we have never seen before, who looks like Śrī herself, perhaps the wife of some great man, is weeping with strangled cries in her bewilderment. You should see her straightaway, holy one. She looks like some goddess fallen from the

heavens. For we do not think she is a mortal, and we should welcome her fittingly."

[5–6] When that knower of righteousness had heard those words of theirs, he, who had obtained special insight through asceticism, reached certainty in his mind and hastened to where Maithilī was. When he had almost reached that spot on foot, the great sage, carrying a splendid guest-offering, stood on the bank of the Jāhnavī and saw Rāghava's beloved wife, Sītā, who was like a woman without a protector.

[7–12] Vālmīki, bull among sages, addressed Sītā, who was crushed under the weight of her grief, with gentle words, gladdening her with his ebullient spirit: "You are Daśaratha's daughter-in-law, Rāma's virtuous chief queen, and the daughter of King Janaka. Welcome to you, O you who are devoted to your husband. Through my pious meditation, I recognized you, even as you were coming, and, in my heart, I determined the entire reason. I know through the vision I have obtained through austerities that you are without sin, Sītā. As you are of a pure nature, Vaidehī, you shall now dwell with me. Not far from my ashram there are some ascetic women engaged in austerities. They will always care for you, my child, as they would their own child. Please accept this guest-offering, trusting and free from anxiety. You should be no more despondent than if you were returning home."

[13–14] When Sītā had heard the sage's extremely wonderful speech, she bowed her head to his feet and, cupping her hands in reverence, said, "So be it." As the sage was departing, Sītā followed behind him, her hands cupped in reverence. She followed him to where the ascetic women, composed and constantly engaged in righteousness, dwelt.

[15–16] And they, seeing the sage approaching followed by Vaidehī, then came forward, filled with joy, and said these words: "Welcome to you, foremost of sages. It has been a long time since you have come, lord. We all greet you reverentially. Now please tell us what we are to do."

[17–20] When Vālmīki had heard those words of theirs, he said this: "This is Sītā who has come, the wife of wise Rāma. She is the daughter-in-law of Daśaratha and the virtuous daughter of Janaka. Although she is without sin, she has been abandoned by her husband. I must care for her always. You venerable ladies should regard her with the greatest affection, and she is to be especially honored by you because of the respect owing to

my words." And then, after comforting Vaidehī again and again, the great and illustrious ascetic, surrounded by his disciples, returned to his own ashram.

Sarga 49

[1–8] But as for Lakṣmaṇa, his mind distressed, he felt terrible anguish as he watched Sītā Maithilī being taken into the ashram. And that prince of immense blazing energy said to his counselor and charioteer, Sumantra: "Just imagine wise Rāma's suffering on account of Sītā's pain. What greater suffering than this could there possibly be for Rāghava after he has sent away Janaka's daughter, a wife of blameless conduct? I think it is clear, charioteer, that Rāghava's separation from Vaidehī has been caused by fate, and that fate is impossible to avert. For even Rāghava, who, when angered, could slay the gods, along with the *gandharvas* and the *asuras* together with the *rākṣasas*, must submit to fate. Earlier, because of my father's words, he dwelt in the very fearsome and deserted Daṇḍaka wilderness for nine years and five. Still, much more painful than that is his banishment of Sītā after hearing the criticism of the townsfolk. It seems cruel to me. Moreover, charioteer, what practice of righteousness has been accomplished in subjecting Maithilī to this act—so destructive to one's reputation—at the instigation of the townsfolk with their baseless allegations?"

[9–11] When Sumantra had heard these various words that Lakṣmaṇa had uttered, he cupped his hands in reverence and uttered this speech: "You should not suffer such anguish with regard to Maithilī, Saumitri. For, Lakṣmaṇa, all this was foretold long ago by the brahmans in the presence of your father. It is certain that Rāma will be unhappy for the most part and will experience little happiness. And after a long time, that great and righteous man will abandon you and Maithilī as well as Śatrughna and Bharata.

[12–17] "And, Saumitri, I really should not tell either you or Bharata those words uttered by Durvāsas, which the king himself did not tell you. The seer uttered these words, bull among men, in my presence and that of the great king as well as in the presence of Vasiṣṭha. When that bull among men had heard the words of the seer, he said to me, 'Charioteer, you must never divulge this to anyone.' Mindful of that, it was my intention, gentle prince, that I would never prove false to the words of the guardian of the

people. However, by no means should I leave this unsaid in your presence, gentle prince. And if you really want to hear it, then listen, delight of the Raghus. Although at that time the lord of men told me this as a secret, even so, I will tell it to you, for fate is impossible to avert."

[18] When Saumitri had heard those important words of his, filled as they were with profound meaning, he then said these words to the charioteer, "Tell me the truth."

Sarga 50

[1–3] Encouraged by great Lakṣmaṇa in this fashion, the charioteer began to relate the words that the seer had uttered: "A long time ago, Atri's son, the great sage named Durvāsas, passed the rainy season in the holy ashram of Vasiṣṭha. And your greatly illustrious father of immense blazing energy came in person to that ashram, eager to see his great *purohita*.

[4–6] "Upon seeing the great sage, who blazed with energy like the sun, seated to the left of Vasiṣṭha, he humbly saluted those two sages, who were foremost among ascetics. Honored by them with words of welcome, a seat, water for washing his feet, and fruits and roots, he stayed with the sages. Around midday, the great seers held various delightful conversations as they sat there.

[7–9] "Then, during one such conversation, the king, with his hands extended and cupped in reverence, addressed Atri's great son, so rich in austerities: 'Holy one, how long will my lineage endure? How long will my Rāma live? How long will my other sons live? And how long will whatever sons Rāma may have live? In keeping with my desire, holy one, please tell me. What does the future hold for my lineage?'

[10–14] "When Durvāsas, of truly immense blazing energy, had heard the words that were spoken by King Daśaratha, he began to speak: 'Rāma will be the lord of Ayodhyā for a long time, and his younger brothers will be happy and prosperous. And it is said that after a long time, that righteous man will be separated from you and illustrious Maithilī for a certain reason. When he has ruled the kingdom for eleven thousand years, Rāma will go to the Brahmaloka. After Kākutstha, conqueror of enemy citadels, has performed opulent *aśvamedhas*, he will establish many royal lineages.'

[15–16] "When that sage of immense blazing energy and tremendous radiance had related everything about the lineage of the king, both past and

future, he fell silent. Then, when the sage had fallen silent, King Daśaratha respectfully saluted those two great sages and returned once more to his splendid city.

[17–18] “These were the words spoken by the sage long ago that I heard there and that I have kept in my heart. All this will not prove otherwise. Such being the case, you must not be tormented, Rāghava, on account of either Sītā or Rāghava. You must be strong, best of men.”

[19–20] When Lakṣmaṇa had heard those truly extraordinary words that had been spoken by the charioteer, he experienced unequaled delight and cried, “Excellent! Excellent!” And as the two of them, the charioteer and Lakṣmaṇa, were conversing in this fashion on the road, the sun set and they camped beside the Gomatī.

Sarga 51

[1–2] Having spent the night there beside the Gomatī, Lakṣmaṇa, the delight of the Raghus, arose in the morning and continued on his way. At midday, the great chariot-warrior entered Ayodhyā, which was filled with precious things and thronged with happy and prosperous people.

[3–7] But the exceedingly wise Saumitri became extremely dejected, thinking, “Once I get there and approach Rāma’s feet, what shall I say?” And as he was brooding in this fashion, Rāma’s extremely splendid palace, as radiant as the moon, appeared before him. Getting down at the gate of the king’s palace, the foremost of men, his face downcast, his mind distressed, entered unhindered. Through eyes filled with tears, he saw before him his elder brother Rāghava, who sat dejected on his splendid throne. His mind distressed, Lakṣmaṇa grasped Rāma’s feet, and then, composing himself, he cupped his hands in reverence and spoke in a dejected voice:

[8–13] “Honoring my noble brother’s command, I have abandoned Janaka’s daughter, as was specified, at the beautiful ashram of Vālmīki on the banks of the Ganges. Now I have returned again, hero, to serve at your feet. You must not grieve, tiger among men, for such is the course of fate. For men like you, strong and wise, never grieve. All accumulations end in loss, all elevations in falls, all unions end in separation, and all life ends in death. Through your mind alone, you are able to conquer yourself by yourself and even all the worlds, Kākutstha. What then to say about

suffering such as this? Bulls among men such as you, your majesty, are not confused over such matters as that for which Maithilī was abandoned out of fear of malicious rumors. So, tiger among men, with your mind composed through fortitude, you must abandon this feeble mental state. You must not torment yourself.”

[14–16] And addressed in this fashion by great Lakṣmaṇa, Kākutstha spoke with the greatest pleasure to Saumitri, who was so loving to his friends: “It is just as you say, Lakṣmaṇa, best of men. I am content, hero, with regard to my command as to what had to be done. You have brought me happiness, gentle brother, and banished my torment. I have been comforted by your very sweet words, Lakṣmaṇa.”

[b]*Sarga 51–1* = Appendix I, Number 8, Lines 1–48*

[1–3 = ll. 1–6] When Rāma had heard those extremely wonderful words of Lakṣmaṇa, he was greatly pleased, and he spoke these words: “It is hard to find such a kinsman as you, especially in these days, wide-eyed and highly intelligent Lakṣmaṇa. Now listen to what is in my heart, gentle brother of auspicious marks. Then, once you have heard it, you must act upon my words.

[4–6 = ll. 7–12] “Four days have passed, gentle brother, during which I have not issued any instructions as to what needs to be done. This pierces me to the vitals, Saumitri. Summon the officials, *purohitas*, ministers, and the men and women who would petition me about something they would have me do, bull among men. For a king who does not carry out the people’s business day after day will, after death, be hurled into a terrible hell. Of this there is no doubt.

[7–8 = ll. 13–16] “I have heard that long ago there was a king named Nṛga, who was a great chariot-warrior. He was a protector of the earth on the earth, reverential toward brahmans, a speaker of truth, and virtuous. Now, on one occasion at Puṣkara that foremost of kings gave to the brahmans ten million cows, adorned with gold, together with their calves.

[9–10 = ll. 17–20] “At that time, there was a poor brahman, a keeper of the sacred fires, who lived by gleaning. His cow, a good milker, wandered off, together with her calf, through mingling with other cows. Afflicted with hunger, he searched for his lost cow here and there, but he could not find her in any kingdom, even after many, many years.

[11–14 = ll. 21–28] "Then, having come to Kanakhala, he saw in the house of a brahman his own cow, which was in good health and whose calf had grown up. Then the twice-born brahman addressed her by her own name, saying, 'Come, Śabalā!' And the cow heard his voice. Recognizing the voice of that twice-born brahman, who was afflicted by hunger, the cow followed behind him as he, who was like fire, was departing. And as that twice-born brahman went along, he said to the seer, 'This is my cow. She was given to me by that lion among kings, Nṛga, during a donation.'

[15–17 = ll. 29–34] "Then a great dispute arose between those two learned brahmans. Still arguing with each other, they approached the donor. Remaining at the gateway of the king's palace for many days and nights, and yet not receiving an audience with Nṛga, they became furious. And those two great and outstanding twice-born brahmans, furious and greatly distressed, uttered these terrible words:

[18–21 = ll. 35–42] " 'Since you do not grant an audience to those who are petitioners for the resolution of a matter, you shall become a lizard, invisible to all beings. For a long time—many thousands of years and many hundreds of years—having become a lizard, you will live in a burrow. Viṣṇu shall be born in this world in a human form, as the increaser of the glory of the Yadus. He shall be known as Vāsudeva. Your majesty, he shall liberate you from this curse uttered by the twice-born brahmans. And by that time, your redemption will be effected.'

[22–24 = ll. 43–48] "When those two brahmans had unleashed that curse in this fashion, they were freed from their cares, and they gave that old and feeble cow to some other brahman. And thus did the king suffer that very terrible curse. For among those petitioning for something they want done, conflict results in harm to kings. So, therefore, you must quickly have those who are seeking redress approach me for an audience. For does not a king obtain the fruit of an affair that is well transacted?"

[c]*Sarga 51–2* = Appendix I, Number 8, Lines 49–82*

[1–3 = ll. 49–54] Upon hearing Rāma's words, Lakṣmaṇa, who grasped their essential meaning, cupped his hands in reverence and said to Rāghava of brightly blazing energy: "For a very minor offense, Kākutstha, those two brahmans pronounced upon the royal seer Nṛga a very grave curse, which was like a second rod of Yama. When he heard that he had committed an

offense, what did that bull among men, King Nṛga, say to those two twice-born brahmans, who were so filled with rage?”

[4–6 = ll. 55–60] Addressed in this fashion by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāghava said: “Listen, gentle brother, to how that king, who was afflicted by the curse, acted long ago. Now, when Nṛga realized that the two brahmans had gone on their way, he summoned all his ministers and the townsfolk, along with his *purohita*. Then the king, completely overcome with misery, addressed all of his subjects, saying: ‘Listen to me attentively!

[7–11 = ll. 61–70] “ ‘Now two blameless brahmans, Nārada and Parvata, having alerted me to the great danger facing me, went off to the highest heaven, having become as the wind. You must consecrate the prince named Vasu here and now. And let a comfortable burrow, approved by the artisans, be fashioned. Rather, let the artisans fashion one burrow that is proof against the rainy season, a second that is proof against the cold season, and yet one more that is comfortable during the summer. And let many different kinds of fruit trees, bearing many different kinds of flavors, as well as flowering creepers, be planted thickly around them. And let there always be wonderfully fragrant flowers for a distance of one and a half leagues around my burrows.’

[12–15 = ll. 71–78] “Once he had made this arrangement, he then installed Vasu, saying: ‘Constant in righteousness, you must protect the people according to the code of the kshatriyas, my son. Best of men, you have witnessed how this curse was made to fall upon me by two angry twice-born brahmans for even such a minor offense. But you must not suffer on my account, bull among men. For destiny, which has brought me to this misfortune, is all powerful, son. Everyone receives what he must receive, whether pleasure or pain, according to his deeds in a previous birth, my child. Therefore, do not be despondent.’

[16–17 = ll. 79–82] “When he had spoken in this fashion there to his son, that bull among men, the very illustrious King Nṛga, went off to live in his well-crafted burrow. And thus, having entered a burrow, which was well adorned within, Nṛga adhered to the command of the twice-born brahmans for many tens of thousands of years.”

[d]*Sarga 51–3* = Appendix I, Number 8, Lines 83–123*

[1–3 = ll. 83–88] “I have thus told you a detailed account of Nṛga’s curse. But if you desire to hear more, then listen to yet another tale.” Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, Saumitri once more said, “I never get my fill of such marvelous tales, your majesty.” Addressed in this fashion by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma, the delight of the Ikṣvākus, began to tell a tale that was exemplary of righteousness.

[4–6 = ll. 89–94] “There was a king named Nimi. Heroic and established in righteousness, he was the twelfth son of the extremely great Ikṣvāku. At that time, near the ashram of Gautama, that king, who was endowed with might, founded a city similar to the city of the gods. He himself aptly named the city ‘Vaijayanta.’ And that was where the illustrious royal seer Nimi made his dwelling.

[7–10 = ll. 95–102] “After he had founded that very great city, this thought struck him: ‘I will perform a long sacrificial session.’ This delighted his father’s heart. Then that royal seer Nimi, foremost of the Ikṣvākus, after taking leave of his father, Ikṣvāku, the son of Manu, chose Atri, Añgiras, and that treasure-store of austerities Bhṛgu, as well as that bull among twice-born brahmans Vasiṣṭha, who was the first to be born of Brahmā. But Vasiṣṭha said to Nimi, the delight of royal seers, ‘I was previously chosen by Indra. Please wait until after that.’

[11–13 = ll. 103–107] “Then the brahman Gautama took his place. As for Vasiṣṭha of immense blazing energy, he performed Indra’s sacrifice. And King Nimi, the lord of men, assembled those brahmans and sacrificed in the vicinity of his own city, not far from the Himalayas. The king entered a state of consecration for five thousand years.

[14–16 = ll. 108–113] “However, at the conclusion of Indra’s sacrifice, the holy seer, blameless Vasiṣṭha, approached the king in order to perform the duties of the *hotṛ* priest. But when Vasiṣṭha, the foremost of brahmans, saw that that sacrifice had been completed by Gautama, he was seized with a towering rage. Expecting to see the king, he sat waiting for a while. But as for the king, he had gone happily to sleep on that day.

[17–18 = ll. 114–117] “Then, because he could not see the royal seer, anger flared up in great Vasiṣṭha, and he began to speak, ‘Since, O king, having treated me with contempt, you chose someone else, your body shall be devoid of consciousness.’

[19–21 = ll. 118–123] “Then, upon waking, the royal seer heard about the curse that had been uttered, and, beside himself with rage, the king said this to the one born of Brahmā: ‘While I was sleeping unawares, you, perverted by anger, unleashed upon me the fire of your curse, which was like a second rod of Yama. Therefore, brahman-seer, your body too, with its radiant splendor shall, no doubt, be rendered devoid of consciousness.’ ”

[e]***Sarga 51–4* = Appendix I, Number 8, Lines 124–171***

[1–2 = ll. 124–127] When Lakṣmaṇa, the slayer of enemy heroes, had heard Rāma’s words, he cupped his hands in reverence and said to Rāghava of brightly blazing energy, “Once they had left their bodies, Kākutstha, how did those two—the twice-born brahman and the king—who were honored by the gods, come to be embodied once again?”

[3–4 = ll. 128–131] Addressed in this fashion by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma, the delight of the Ikṣvākus, who was possessed of immense blazing energy, replied to that bull among men, “When those two righteous men—the king and the brahman-seer—had abandoned their bodies because of their mutual curses, both of them, so rich in austerities, became as the wind.

[5–7 = ll. 132–137] “Lacking a body, the great sage Vasiṣṭha, of immense blazing energy, went to his father, Brahmā, for the sake of another body. Then, after reverently honoring the feet of the wise god of gods, he, who had become as air, spoke these words to Grandfather Brahmā: ‘Blessed lord, I have been rendered bodiless by Nimi’s curse. Please show your grace with regard to the creation of another body.’

[8–10 = ll. 138–143] “Then the self-existent Brahmā of immeasurable splendor said to him: ‘You, who are greatly illustrious, must first enter the semen released by Mitra and Varuṇa. And so you will not be born from a womb, foremost of the twice-born, but, endowed with great righteousness, you shall, once more, come under my control.’ Addressed in this fashion by the god, he made a reverential salutation and, after respectfully circumambulating Grandfather Brahmā, he went quickly to Varuṇa’s abode.

[11–12 = ll. 144–147] “Now at that very time, Mitra was sharing Varuṇa’s rule. He had come there and, together with that lord of the milk ocean, was being honored by the lords of the gods. And at the same time, Urvaśī, the foremost of the *apsarases*, surrounded by her companions, happened to come to that place.

[13–15 = ll. 148–153] “When Varuṇa saw Urvaśī, who was endowed with such beauty, playing in his own abode, he was overcome with tremendous lust for her. Varuṇa then asked that foremost of *apsarases*—whose eyes were like lotus petals and whose face was like the full moon—to make love with him. But cupping her hands in reverence, she replied to Varuṇa, ‘O lord of the gods, I have already been asked by Mitra personally.’

[16–20 = ll. 154–163] “Then Varuṇa, tormented by the arrows of Kandarpa, said these words: ‘I will release my semen into this pot fashioned by the god. Since you do not wish to make love with me, fair lady of lovely hips, I shall satisfy my desire for you and obtain release in this way.’ Then, when Urvaśī had heard that eloquent speech of the world guardian Varuṇa, she was extremely pleased, and she said these words: ‘Let this be as you wish. My heart belongs to you. My love for you is greater; nevertheless, my body belongs to Mitra, O lord.’ When he was addressed in this fashion by Urvaśī, he discharged into that pot his great and wondrous semen, which was as radiant as a blazing fire.

[21–24 = ll. 164–171] “But as for Urvaśī, she went to where the god Mitra was. Mitra, however, in a towering rage, said these words to Urvaśī: ‘Having been first solicited by me, why did you not reject him? Why did you choose another with your heart, slut? Because of this wicked act, you, sullied by my wrath, shall descend to the world of mortals and dwell there for some time. Budha’s son, the royal seer Purūravas, is the king of Kāśi. You must go to him this very day, foolish woman. For he shall be your lord.’ ”

[f]*Sarga 51–5* = Appendix I, Number 8, Lines 172–212*

[1–2 = ll. 172–175] When Lakṣmaṇa had heard that divine story, which was so wonderful to contemplate, he was supremely delighted, and he said these words to Rāghava: “Once they had left their bodies, Kākutsha, how did those two—the twice-born brahman and the king—who were honored by the gods, come to be embodied once again?”

[3–8 = ll. 176–187] When truly valorous Rāma had heard that speech of his, he told him the tale of great Vasiṣṭha. “Then, best of men, from that pot of the great god, which was filled with semen, those two brahmans, foremost among seers and filled with blazing energy, were born. The first to be born from it was the holy seer Agastya. Saying to Mitra, ‘I am not your

son,' he left him. For Mitra's semen had first been deposited in Urvaśī, and it came to be in the pot where the semen of Varuṇa already was. Then, after some time, that divinity of the Ikṣvākus, Vasiṣṭha, endowed with blazing energy, was born of Mitra and Varuṇa. And the moment Vasiṣṭha was born, Ikṣvāku, of immense blazing energy, chose that blameless sage as his *purohita* for the prosperity of our lineage, gentle brother.

[9 = ll. 188–189] "Thus have I told you of the emergence of great Vasiṣṭha with his new body, gentle brother. Now hear about the birth of Nimi, just as it happened.

[10–11 = ll. 190–193] "When the wise seers saw that the king was disembodied, they then all performed a sacrifice on his behalf for the duration of his consecration. And those foremost among the twice-born brahmans, along with the townsfolk and servants, preserved the body of the lord of men, worshiping it with fragrances and garlands.

[12–13 = ll. 194–197] "So then, upon the completion of the sacrifice, Bhṛgu, who was there, said this: 'I shall make your consciousness return, as I am pleased with you, your majesty.' Then all the gods, being greatly pleased, said this to Nimi's consciousness: 'Choose a boon, royal seer. Where shall your consciousness be manifested?'

[14–17 = ll. 198–204] "Addressed in this fashion by all the gods, Nimi's consciousness then said, 'I would dwell in the eyes of all beings, O foremost among the gods.' The wise gods then said to Nimi's consciousness: 'Very well. Having become as the wind, you shall move about in the eyes of all beings. On your account, lord of the earth, eyes will blink again and again for the sake of rest, as you, who have become as air, move about in them.' Having spoken in this fashion, all the wise gods departed as they had come.

[18–21 = ll. 205–212] "But as for those great seers, so rich in austerities, they placed on Nimi's body a fire stick. And those great seers then spun it back and forth vigorously to the accompaniment of *mantras* and oblations in order to produce a son for Nimi. As that fire stick was being spun back and forth there, a great ascetic came forth. Because of the spinning back and forth [*mathana*], they called him 'Mithi.' And because of such a birth [*janana*], he became Janaka. And since he was born of someone who was bodiless [*videha*], he was known as Vaideha. And thus was born Janaka, of

immense blazing energy, the first king of Videha. He was called Mithi and, because of him, his lineage is known as Maithila.”

[g]*Sarga 51–6* = Appendix I, Number 8, Lines 213–258*

[1–3 = ll. 213–218] Now, as Rāma was speaking in this fashion, Lakṣmaṇa, the slayer of enemy heroes, addressed the great man, who seemed to shine with his blazing energy: “Tiger among kings, it was a great thing, astonishing and wonderful, that happened long ago to disembodied Vasiṣṭha, along with Nimi. But even though he was consecrated for sacrifice, King Nimi, who was a kshatriya hero, did not show any forbearance toward the great Vasiṣṭha.”

[4–5 = ll. 219–222] As Lakṣmaṇa was speaking in this fashion, Rāma, the foremost of those who give delight, spoke once more to his heroic brother of brightly blazing energy: “Anger such as was borne patiently by Yayāti, who relied on the quality of goodness, is hard to endure, Saumitri. Now listen to this carefully.

[6–8 = ll. 223–228] “King Yayāti, who caused his people to prosper, was the son of Nahuṣa. He had two wives, gentle brother, who were unmatched in beauty on earth. The one that was held in higher esteem by that royal seer, the son of Nahuṣa, was a *daitya* woman who was called Śarmiṣṭhā, the daughter of Vṛṣaparvan. And, bull among men, fair-waisted Devayānī, the daughter of Uśanas, was also Yayāti’s wife, but she was not beloved by the king.

[9–10 = ll. 229–232] “Then they had two sons, who were handsome and steadfast. Śarmiṣṭhā gave birth to Pūru and Devayānī to Yadu. But Pūru was the more beloved of the king because of his virtues and for his mother’s sake. Then, filled with unhappiness, Yadu said to his mother:

[11–13 = ll. 233–238] “ ‘Although you are born in the lineage of godlike Bhārgava, who is tireless in action, you must endure this heartfelt sorrow and this unbearable disrespect. So, my lady, let us together enter the fire, the eater of oblations, and let the king take his pleasure for many nights with that daughter of the *daityas*. But if this is to be endured by you, please grant me permission. You may tolerate this, but I will not. Without a doubt, I shall die.’

[14–17 = ll. 239–246] “Then, when Devayānī had heard this speech of her son, who was weeping and sorely afflicted, she was in a towering rage,

and she called to mind her father. Realizing his daughter's intention, the Bhārgava came swiftly to where Devayānī was. Seeing that his daughter was not her usual self and that she was despondent and distracted, her father said these words: 'What is this?' In a towering rage, Devayānī said these words to her father, the Bhārgava of brightly blazing energy, who was questioning her again and again:

[18–20 = ll. 247–252] " 'I can no longer live, foremost of sages. Therefore, I shall enter the fire or the water, or I shall consume virulent poison. You do not understand how miserable and disrespected I am. For when one mistreats a tree, those things that depend on the tree are destroyed as well. Having insulted a Bhārgava through his contempt, the royal seer now shows his contempt for me, nor does he treat me with respect.'

[21–23 = ll. 253–258] "When Uśanas had heard those words of hers, he was overcome with anger, and he began to say this concerning the son of Nahuṣa: 'Since, lacking self-control, the son of Nahuṣa has treated me with contempt, he shall attain decrepitude and become withered with extreme senescence.' When he had spoken in this fashion and had comforted his daughter, the illustrious brahman-seer Bhārgava returned to his own abode."

[h]*Sarga 51–7* = Appendix I, Number 8, Lines 259–302*

[1–3 = ll. 259–264] "When the son of Nahuṣa had heard that Uśanas was enraged, he was afflicted by that curse. Then, having attained extreme old age, he said this to his son: [i]'You are a knower of righteousness, Yadu. Therefore, for my sake, my illustrious son, you must accept this extreme old age, while I enjoy the pleasures of sex. For I have not thus far had my fill of sensual pleasures, bull among men. Once I have enjoyed them to my heart's content, then only will I take back this old age.'

[4–5 = ll. 265–268] "But when Yadu had heard those words, he replied to the bull among men: 'Let your beloved son Pūru take on this old age. I have been excluded, O king, with regard to objects of value and even from your presence. So let those others with whom you have been enjoying the objects of pleasure take on your old age, your majesty.'

[6–9 = ll. 269–276] "When the king had heard those words of his, he said to Pūru, 'For my sake, great-armed prince, you must take on this old age.' Addressed in this fashion by the son of Nahuṣa, Pūru, his hands cupped in reverence, said, 'I am fortunate. I am favored. I abide by your

command.’ Acknowledging Pūru’s words with the greatest delight, the son of Nahuṣa attained unequaled joy, and he transferred his old age. Then the king, once more young, performed thousands of sacrifices and ruled the earth for many thousands of years. [269–76]

[10–12 = ll. 277–282] “Now, after a long time, the king said to Pūru: ‘Give back that old age, my son. Return that deposit to me. My son, I transferred that old age to you as a trust. Therefore, I shall take it back. Do not be concerned. Great-armed prince, I am pleased with your acceptance of my command, and so, filled with affection, I shall consecrate you as the lord of men.’

[13–16 = ll. 283–290] “After King Yayāti, son of Nahuṣa, had spoken to his son Pūru in this fashion, he spoke these words in anger to Devayānī’s son: ‘In you, I have given birth to an incorrigible *rākṣasa* in the form of a son. Since you disobeyed my command, you shall have no power over the people. Since you disregarded me, your father, who is your *guru*, you shall father fearsome *rākṣasas* who are *yātudhānas*. And, evil-minded prince, your lineage, arising from the Lunar Dynasty, will not endure. For your descendants will be as ill disciplined as you are.’

[17–20 = ll. 291–298] “Once he had addressed Yadu in this fashion, the royal seer honored Pūru—who would enhance the kingdom—with royal consecration and then entered an ashram. Then, after a long time, he met his appointed end. And in this way, King Yayāti, the son of Nahuṣa, went to the highest heaven. Meanwhile, the very illustrious king Pūru ruled that kingdom with great righteousness in the foremost of cities, Pratiṣṭhāna, in the kingdom of Kāśi. But Yadu sired *yātudhānas* by the thousands as well as an enduring lineage of kings in the inaccessible city of Krauñcavana.

[21–22 = ll. 299–302] “And thus, according to the code of the kshatriyas, Yayāti tolerated the curse unleashed by Uśanas, as Nimi did not. I have now told you everything, gentle brother. Let us grant audiences to all those who have legitimate business so that there is no dereliction such as there was in the case of Nṛga.”

[Interpolated Passage III follows *sarga* 51–7*; see PVR 7: 1318–29]

Sarga 52

[1–2] Then Sumantra entered and said these words to Rāghava: “Your majesty, some ascetics who dwell on the banks of the Yamunā—great seers

who have placed the Bhārgava Cyavana at their head—are being held at the gateway. Filled with affection, great king, they are in haste and request an audience with you, tiger among men."

[3–4] When Rāma, who understood righteousness, had heard those words of his, he said, "Have those great twice-born brahmans, whose leader is the Bhārgava, enter." Honoring the king's command, the doorkeeper, cupping his hands at his head in reverence, then had those many esteemed ascetics enter.

[5–9] Then more than one hundred great ascetics, glowing with their own blazing energy, entered the king's palace. Bearing holy water from all the sacred sites and fruits and roots in full vessels, those twice-born brahmans offered them in abundance to Rāma. And Rāma, moved by affection, accepted all of that—all the waters from sacred sites and the various fruits. And that great-armed hero said to all those great seers, "Please sit on these excellent seats, in due order." When the great seers had heard Rāma's speech, they all sat down on beautiful, gilded seats fit for ascetics.

[10–12] Then Rāghava, the conqueror of enemy citadels, self-controlled and cupping his hands in reverence, regarded the seers seated there and spoke these words: "What is the purpose of your visit? What shall I do, O you whose wealth consists of asceticism? I am at the command of the great seers and will happily fulfill all your wishes. This entire kingdom and the life residing in my breast—everything of mine exists only for the sake of the twice-born. This is the truth I am telling you."

[13–16] When they heard those words of his, there was a great cry of approbation on the part of those seers of fierce austerities who dwelt on the banks of the Yamunā. Filled with the greatest delight, those great sages said: "This is characteristic of you alone, best of men, and of no one else on earth. Many extremely powerful kings whom we approached, your majesty, without even hearing about the importance of the undertaking, were not inclined to give their assent. But you, on the other hand, because of your respect for brahmans, have given your assent without even looking into the matter. You must do this; for, without a doubt, you are the one to do it. You must save the seers from a terrible danger."

Sarga 53

[1] Lauded by the seers who were speaking in this fashion, Kākutstha said these words: “Tell me what needs to be done for you. I will banish your fear.”

[2–4] As Kākutstha was speaking in this fashion, Bhārgava said these words: “Listen, lord of men, to the cause of our fear and that of our country. Long ago, Rāma, in the Kṛta Yuga, there was a great *asura* named Madhu. That extremely powerful descendant of Diti was the eldest son of Lolā. Devoted to brahmans, a source of refuge and perfect in intellect, his friendship with the lofty gods was unequaled.

[5–6] “This Madhu was endowed with might and intent upon righteousness. Because of his high regard for him, Rudra gave him a marvelous boon. Then that great divinity, very pleased, extracting an extremely powerful and extremely radiant lance from his own lance, presented it. Then he said these words:

[7–9] “ ‘You have performed this splendid and unequaled righteousness in order to propitiate me. Filled with the greatest affection, I give you this supreme weapon. So long as you do not oppose the gods or the brahmans, the lance will remain yours, great *asura*. Otherwise, it will vanish. This lance will reduce to ashes whoever might be so incautious as to challenge you in battle, and it will then return to your hand.’

[10–14] “When the great *asura* had obtained this boon from Rudra in this fashion, he then prostrated himself before Mahādeva and said these words: ‘Blessed one, may this unsurpassed lance always remain with my lineage. For you, O God, are the lord of the gods.’ Śiva Mahādeva, the God and lord of all beings, replied to Madhu, who was speaking: ‘It shall not be so. But your excellent words, prompted by my grace, must not prove fruitless. The lance shall pass on to your son alone. As long as this lance shall remain in your son’s hand, he, lance in hand, will be invulnerable to all beings.’

[15–17] “And then, when Madhu had received that extremely marvelous boon from the God in this fashion, that foremost of the *asuras* had a resplendent palace built. His beloved and illustrious wife was the radiant Kumbhīnasī, she who was the child of Viśvāvasu by Analā. She had an immensely powerful and fearsome son named Lavaṇa. From childhood onward he was evil and did only wicked things.

[18–20] “Seeing that his son was ill disciplined, Madhu was filled with sorrow. He gave way to grief, but he said nothing to him. He left this world and entered the ocean, the abode of Varuṇa, after bestowing the lance upon Lavaṇa and informing him of the boon. Through the power of that lance and because of his own evil nature, he torments the three worlds and especially the ascetics.

[21–23] “Such is the power of Lavaṇa, and such is the nature of that lance. Having heard this, Kākutstha, you must be the one who decides. For you are our ultimate recourse. Up until now we seers, afflicted with fear, have begged many kings for safety, but, hero, we could find no one to protect us. Since we heard that Rāvaṇa was slain, along with his troops and mounts, we can find no other king on earth to protect us, Rāma. And so, afflicted by the fear of Lavaṇa, we seek protection.”

Sarga 54

[1–2] Once that had been related, Rāma, his hands cupped in reverence, replied to the seers, “What does Lavaṇa eat? How does he conduct himself? And where does he live?” When the seers had heard the words of Rāghava, they all informed him of how Lavaṇa had thrived.

[3–5] “His diet consists of all creatures, but especially ascetics. His conduct is that of perpetual ferocity, and he always lives in Madhuvana. He always makes his daily meal after killing tens of thousands of lions, tigers, deer, and elephants, as well as men. Then that immensely powerful creature, like Yama himself, the ender of all things, with his jaws gaping wide at the time of universal destruction, devours still other creatures.”

[6–9] When Rāghava had heard those words, he said to the great sages: “I will have that *rākṣasa* slain. Let your fear be gone.” When he had thus made this promise to those sages of fierce blazing energy, the delight of the Raghus addressed his brothers, who were all assembled, “Who is going to kill Lavaṇa, heroes? Please determine which one—great-armed Bharata or, on the other hand, Śatrughna—should deal with him.” Addressed in this fashion by Rāghava, Bharata said these words: “I will kill him. Please let me deal with him.”

[10–14] When Lakṣmaṇa’s younger brother had heard Bharata’s words, which were so expressive of heroism and valor, he stood up, leaving his golden seat. Prostrating himself before the lord of men, Śatrughna said

these words: “The great-armed middlemost delight of the Raghus has already done his duty. My revered elder brother earlier guarded the deserted city of Ayodhyā while suffering torment in his heart until the return of his revered elder brother. The great prince experienced many hardships, your majesty, as he lay on his painful beds in Nandigrāma. He lived on fruits and roots and wore matted locks and barkcloth garments. Having experienced such pain, the delight of the Rāghavas should not once again experience such suffering while I am here to be dispatched, your majesty.”

[15–18] As Śatrughna was speaking in this fashion, Rāghava once again spoke: “So be it, Kākutstha. You must carry out my command. I shall consecrate you as king in Madhu’s lovely city. Let Bharata stay here, great-armed hero, if you are concerned about him. You are heroic, well trained, and capable of resettling that city, which was so beloved of Madhu, as well as its splendid countryside. For whoever uproots a lineage and then, upon the destruction of the king, fails to install another king, descends to hell.

[19–21] “Once you have slain Madhu’s son, the evil-intentioned Lavaṇa, you must rule that kingdom in accordance with righteousness, if you heed my words. And you must not raise any objection, hero, in connection with my words. A younger brother must obey the commands of his elder brother. Of this there is no doubt. You must accept the consecration I have undertaken, Kākutstha, one that is accompanied by rites and *mantras* performed by the brahmans headed by Vasiṣṭha.”

Sarga 55

[j][1; 971*; 2a–d; 973*1–6; 2ef; 977*] But when he was addressed in this fashion by Rāma, mighty Śatrughna was extremely embarrassed, and he spoke hesitantly: “I feel that there is something wrong in this affair, Kākutstha, lord of men. How can the junior-most be consecrated when there are elder brothers living? It is true, bull among men, that an order must inevitably be carried out. And your command, illustrious prince, is especially inviolable. Since our middle brother had already made his vow, I should not have spoken after that. I spoke improperly in saying that I would slay the fearsome Lavaṇa in battle. And, bull among men, this wrongful speech of mine will have dire consequences, for one should not speak further once an elder has spoken. It was filled with unrighteousness and would exclude one from heaven. I shall not speak after you a second time,

Kākutstha. Your majesty, bull among men, I will carry out your wishes. Kākutstha, delight of the Raghus, please exonerate me from any wrongdoing with regard to what I have done."

[3–5] And when that hero, great Śatrughna, had spoken in this fashion, Rāma, delighted, addressed Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata: "Carefully fetch the requisites for the consecration. I will consecrate this invincible tiger among men this very day. You two Kākutsthas, acting on my orders, must bring together the *purohita*, the vedic brahmans, the sacrificial priests, and all my counselors."

[6–8] Following the king's command, those great chariot-warriors did so. Then, having placed at their head the *purohita* with all the requisites for the consecration, they entered the king's palace, which was like the mansion of Indra, smasher of citadels. And then the majestic consecration of great Śatrughna commenced, bringing joy to Rāghava and to the city. Then, placing the consecrated Śatrughna on his lap, Rāghava spoke these sweet words, inciting his blazing martial energy:

[9–13] "Here is a divine arrow for you. It is infallible and a conqueror of enemy citadels. With it, gentle delight of the Raghus, you shall kill Lavaṇa. This arrow was created, Kākutstha, when the self-existent and invincible god, whom even the gods and *asuras* could not perceive, lay upon the vast ocean. For, O hero, although he was imperceptible to all beings, he was overcome with rage, and he created this greatest of arrows in order to kill the evil-minded Madhu and Kaiṭabha, who constituted an obstacle. And so, desiring to create the three worlds, he killed those two in battle with this foremost of arrows. Then he created the worlds. I did not release this arrow earlier when I wanted to kill Rāvaṇa, Śatrughna, fearing that there might be a great panic among creatures.

[14–20] "Moreover, the great lance that he has, that supreme weapon, was given by the great three-eyed Śiva to Madhu for the destruction of his enemies. Leaving it in his palace, where it is continually worshiped, he searches all directions and so gets his food. And whenever anyone seeking battle challenges him, that *rākṣasa* seizes that lance and reduces him to ashes. So you, tiger among men, must stand outside the gateway before he enters the city while he is still without his weapon. Then, great-armed bull among men, you must challenge him to battle before he has entered his palace. Only then will you kill that *rākṣasa*. But if you act in any other way,

he will be impossible to kill. If, however, you act in this fashion, hero, he will be destroyed. I have now told you everything, including the means of evading that lance. For the decree of majestic black-throated Śiva is impossible to violate."

Sarga 56

[1–6] When the delight of the Raghus had spoken in this fashion to Śatrughna Kākutstha and had praised him again and again, he once more uttered excellent words: "Let these four thousand cavalry, two thousand chariots, and a hundred war-elephants accompany you, Śatrughna, as well as actors and dancers and town shopkeepers carrying their various wares, bull among men. And take ten thousand gold and silver pieces and, Śatrughna, bull among men, go with wagons sufficient for that treasure. For, heroic best of men, with words and gifts you must win over your unsurpassed army, which must be well maintained, happy, and well fed. For, Rāghava, where your troop of retainers, who must be kept happy, will be stationed, they will be without provisions, wives, and kinsmen.

[7–12] "Therefore, having dispatched your vast host, filled with contented troops, you, your bow in hand, must then proceed alone to Madhu's woods. You must proceed unsuspected in such a way that Lavaṇa, Madhu's son, does not realize that you are coming, eager for battle. There is no other way for him to be killed, bull among men. For whoever comes within the range of Lavaṇa's sight will inevitably be slain by him. When the hot season is over and the rains are at hand, you must kill Lavaṇa, gentle brother. For that is the proper time to deal with that evil-minded creature. Placing the great seers at their head, let your soldiers march forth, such that they may cross the waters of the Jāhnavī during the remainder of the hot season. Then, swift-striding warrior, once you have encamped your entire army on the bank of the river, you must go on ahead determinedly with your bow."

[13–17] Addressed in this fashion by Rāma, Śatrughna assembled the immensely powerful captains of his army and spoke these words: "The various places at which you are to make camp are well known to you. You are to camp at them peacefully, in such a way that no one suffers any hardship." When he had thus given them their orders and sent forth his great army, he made his respectful salutations to Kausalyā, Sumitrā, and

Kaikeyī. After reverentially circumambulating Rāma and bowing his head at his feet, Śatrughna, scorcher of his foes, granted leave by Rāma, bowed with hands cupped in reverence to Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata. Then immensely powerful and self-controlled Śatrughna, after reverentially circumambulating the *purohita* Vasiṣṭha, set forth.

Sarga 57

[1–4] After having sent forth his entire army, Śatrughna stayed behind for a month. Then, hastening, he quickly set forth on the road all by himself. Camping for two nights on the way, the heroic delight of the Rāghavas reached Vālmīki's holy ashram, which was an excellent place to stay. After reverentially saluting the great Vālmīki, foremost of sages, he cupped his hands in reverence and said these words: "Holy one, I have come at the behest of my elder brother and would like to stay here overnight. I will depart tomorrow morning toward the west, the direction guarded by Varuṇa."

[5–6] When that bull among sages had heard Śatrughna's words, he smiled and replied to that great man: "Welcome, illustrious prince! Truly, gentle prince, this ashram belongs to the House of Rāghava. So you should have no hesitation in accepting from me a seat, water to wash your feet, and the guest-offering."

[7–8] Then, after accepting this honor, Kākutstha ate some food—fruits and roots—and was quite satisfied. When he had eaten, the great-armed prince said this to the great seer: "To whom did all these sacrificial implements that are near the ashram once belong?"

[9–12] When Vālmīki had heard that speech of his, he spoke these words: "Listen, Śatrughna, to whom this sacrificial ground once belonged. A mighty and highly righteous king named Mitrasaha, the son of great Sudāsa, is an ancestor of yours. Although he was but a child, Mitrasaha Saudāsa went out hunting, and that hero spied a pair of *rākṣasas* who were constantly roaming about. Fearsome and taking on the form of tigers, they were devouring many thousands of animals, and yet they were unsatisfied and could not get enough.

[13–16] "And when he saw those two *rākṣasas* and saw that the forest had been stripped of game, he was filled with a towering rage, and he killed one of them with a great arrow. But once that bull among men Saudāsa had

struck down that one, he was freed from his distress and anger, and he gazed at the slain *rākṣasa*. When the companion of that *rākṣasa* saw him staring, he was filled with a terrible anguish and said this to Saudāsa: ‘Since you have killed my companion, who had done nothing wrong, I will pay you back, you evil wretch!’

[17–19] “Once he had addressed him in this fashion, the *rākṣasa* vanished on the spot. Now, in the course of time, Mitrasaha became king. Now, as king he performed a sacrifice, just near this ashram. And Vasiṣṭha oversaw that great sacrifice, the *aśvamedha*. The sacrifice there was very grand and went on for many tens of thousands of years. Lavish and accompanied with the greatest splendor, it was equal to a sacrifice of the gods themselves.

[20–23] “Now at the completion of the sacrifice, the *rākṣasa*, recalling his former enmity, took the form of Vasiṣṭha and addressed the king in this fashion: ‘Today, when the final rites are over, you must quickly give me some food, including meat. You must not hesitate in this regard.’ When the lord of the earth had heard those words uttered by the *rākṣasa*, who could take on any form at will, he said to one who was skilled in the preparation of food, ‘You must quickly prepare savory food with meat, fit for the sacrificial offering, so that my *guru* will be fully satisfied.’

[24–26] “Because of that order of the lord of kings, the cook’s mind was in a flurry of agitation, and so the *rākṣasa* then took on the guise of the cook then and there. He then offered human flesh to the king, saying, ‘I have brought you this savory food with meat, fit for the sacrificial offering.’ And the king, together with his wife Madayantī, offered Vasiṣṭha that food, which the *rākṣasa* had brought, O tiger among men.

[27–29] “Then the brahman, realizing that human flesh had been brought as his food, was seized with a towering rage, and he began to speak, ‘Since, your majesty, you wanted to give me this food, such food will be yours without a doubt.’ Then the king and his wife prostrated themselves again and again. And he then once more told Vasiṣṭha what the *rākṣasa* in the form of a brahman had said.

[30–32] “When Vasiṣṭha had heard from the king about the abominable thing that the *rākṣasa* had done, he spoke once again to the king, that bull among men: ‘It is impossible to falsify these words that I spoke when I was overcome with anger. But I shall grant you a boon. The duration of this

curse shall be twelve years. Then, through my grace, best of kings, you will not remember what will have transpired.'

[33–34] "And so the king, that crusher of his foes, experienced that curse and then regained his kingdom and once more protected his subjects. And this area near the ashram about which you were inquiring, Rāghava, is the lovely sacrificial ground that belonged to Mitrasaha Kalmāṣapāda."

[35] When Śatrughna had heard the extremely dreadful tale of that best of kings Kalmāṣapāda, he reverentially saluted the great seer Vālmīki and then entered a leaf hut.

Sarga 58

[1–2] Now, the very night on which Śatrughna entered the leaf hut, Sītā gave birth to two sons. At midnight the young sons of the sages reported the good news of Sītā's auspicious childbirth to Vālmīki: "O sage of great blazing energy, please prepare a protective amulet for them that will ward off malignant spirits."

[3–8] When the sage had heard those words of theirs, he was delighted, and he fashioned for each infant a protective amulet that would destroy malignant spirits and ward off *rākṣasas*. Taking up the cut tips of *kuśa* grass as well as the remaining stalks, called *lava*, the twice-born Vālmīki handed over for each infant a protective amulet that would ward off malignant spirits, saying: "The one who was born first of the two is to be cleansed with the cut tips of *kuśa* grass that have been sanctified with *mantras*, and he shall thus be known by the name Kuśa. And this very quiet one, born second of the two, is to be cleansed by the elderly women with the remaining stalks, called *lava*, and so he shall be Lava by name. Thus, the two of them, the twins Kuśa and Lava, will be renowned by the two names that I have given them." Taking the amulets from the sage's hands with deep concentration, those women, free from impurity, then affixed them to the two infants.

[9–11] In the middle of the night, Śatrughna heard that wonderful news—the auspicious birth of twins to Sītā—as well as praise of Rāma, the announcement of the children's names and dynastic name, and the application of the amulets that was being done. Then, returning to his leaf hut that night, he cried, "Thank heavens! Thank heavens!" Thus, that

monsoon night in the month of Śrāvaṇa passed quickly for great Śatrughna, who was delighted.

[12–14] And in the morning, mighty Śatrughna, after completing his sequence of morning activities, folding his hands in reverence, took his leave of the sage and once more set out, heading west. He proceeded to the bank of the Yamunā, camping for seven nights on the way. There he took up residence in the ashram of those seers of pious reputation. And there that greatly illustrious king stayed with the sages, whose leader was the Bhārgava Cyavana, engaging in many kinds of discourse.

Sarga 59

[1–2] Then, as the night came on, Śatrughna questioned the brahman Cyavana, the delight of the Bhṛgus, about Lavaṇa's strengths and weaknesses and about the power of his lance, saying, "Brahman, who were those who were previously struck down by him with that greatest of lances when they approached him for single combat?"

[3–6] When Cyavana of immense blazing energy had heard that speech of great Śatrughna, he replied to that delight of the Raghus: "The feats that he performed are countless, bull among men. But just hear from me what befell one scion of the Ikṣvāku lineage. Long ago, in Ayodhyā, there was a mighty king, the son of Yuvanāśva. That mighty man was famed throughout the three worlds as Māndhātṛ. Having brought the entire earth under his rule, that king and lord of the earth then prepared to conquer the world of the gods.

[7–9] "Now, when, in his desire to conquer the world of the gods, Māndhātṛ had completed his preparations, Indra and the great gods were acutely afraid. Honored by the hosts of the gods with half of Śakra's throne and half of his kingdom, the king gave his word and then ascended. Realizing his malicious intention, Indra, the chastiser of Pāka, spoke these conciliatory words to the son of Yuvanāśva:

[10–11] " 'Bull among men, you are not yet the king of the world of men. Nevertheless, without having subjugated the entire earth, you desire the kingship of the gods here. If, hero, the entire earth were completely under your sway, then you, along with your servants, troops, and mounts, might exercise the rulership of the gods.'

[12–14] “But even as Indra was speaking in this fashion, Māndhātṛ said these words to him: ‘Where on the surface of the earth is my rule contested, Śakra?’ Thousand-eyed Indra said to him, ‘In Madhuvana, Madhu’s son, the *rākṣasa* named Lavaṇa, does not obey your command, blameless king.’ When the king had heard those unwelcome and terrible words spoken by thousand-eyed Indra, he hung his head in shame and was unable to reply.

[15–18] “And so, taking leave of thousand-eyed Indra and still hanging his head somewhat in shame, the majestic lord of men returned once more to this world. Cherishing indignation in his heart, the blameless king, together with his servants, troops, and mounts, came in order to subjugate Madhu’s son. Eager to fight Lavaṇa, that bull among men dispatched a messenger to him. When he had gone there, the messenger said many unpleasant words to Madhu’s son, but the *rākṣasa* just devoured him as he was speaking in that fashion.

[19–23] “When the messenger had not returned after some time, the king, seized with anger, assailed the *rākṣasa* with a hail of arrows from every side. Then, laughing, Lavaṇa took that lance in his hand and released that supreme weapon for the destruction of the king, along with his entire retinue. That blazing lance reduced the king to ashes, along with his servants, troops, and mounts, and then returned to Lavaṇa’s hand. And thus was that very great king slain, along with his troops and mounts. For the power of that lance, hero, is immeasurable and unsurpassed. However, tomorrow morning, without a doubt, you shall quickly kill Lavaṇa before he can take up his weapon. Indeed, your victory is certain.”

Sarga 60

[1–4] As they were carrying on this conversation and hoping for an auspicious victory, the night passed swiftly for great Śatrughna. Now at that very moment, in the clear dawn, that heroic *rākṣasa* went out of the city, intent on gathering food. At that juncture, heroic Śatrughna crossed the Yamunā River and took up his position, bow in hand, at the gate of Madhupura. Then, just at midday, that *rākṣasa* of cruel deeds returned bearing the weight of many thousands of creatures.

[5–8] When the *rākṣasa* spied Śatrughna standing at the gate and holding his weapon, he said to him: “What are you going to do with that? In my wrath, I have devoured thousands of armed men such as you, lowest of

men. Are you eager to die? This food of mine is still not enough, lowest of men. How is it, fool, that, having come, you have entered my mouth of your own accord?" As he was speaking in this fashion and laughing again and again, Śatrughna, endowed with valor, shed tears of rage.

[9–12] When great Śatrughna was overwhelmed with rage, blazing sparks flew from his every limb. And in his towering rage Śatrughna said to that night-roaming *rākṣasa*: "I am eager for battle—a single combat with you—evil-minded wretch. I am the son of Daśaratha and the brother of wise Rāma. I am Śatrughna, 'Slayer of Enemies,' by name, who has come here eager to kill you. So you must offer me single combat, as I am eager for battle. For you are the enemy of all living things, and you shall not escape me with your life."

[13–17] But even as that foremost of men was speaking in this fashion, the *rākṣasa*, chuckling, replied to him: "You fool, it is my good fortune that you have come. You fool, you lowest of men, it was Rāma who, for the sake of a woman, killed the *rākṣasa* named Rāvaṇa, the brother of my mother's cousin. But because I held you in such contempt, I let the complete destruction of Rāvaṇa's lineage pass and spared all of you especially. Thus, I did not kill all you lowest of men since I regarded you—your ancestors, your descendants, and you yourselves—as too insignificant. Since, you fool, you desire to fight, I will give you battle of whatever kind you wish. I will just make ready a weapon to deal with you."

[18–19] Then Śatrughna said to him: "How will you escape from me with your life? For an accomplished warrior must not permit even a feeble enemy who has encountered him to escape. For someone of irresolute mind who gives an enemy an opportunity to escape will surely be slain through his dim-wittedness, just like a coward."

Sarga 61

[1–2] When Lavaṇa had heard those words of great Śatrughna, he manifested the most violent rage, and he cried, "Stay right where you are! Stay right where you are!" Pounding his fist in his hand and loudly grinding his teeth, Lavaṇa repeatedly challenged that tiger among the Raghus.

[3–7] As Lavaṇa of fearsome valor was speaking these words in this fashion, Śatrughna, the slayer of the enemies of the gods, said these words to him: "Śatrughna had not been born when you vanquished those others.

Therefore, this very day, struck down by my arrow, you must go to the abode of Yama. And, evil-minded wretch, may the seers and learned brahmans see you struck down by me in battle this very day, just as the thirty gods saw Rāvaṇa struck down. Once you have fallen this very day, incinerated by my arrow, night-roaming *rākṣasa*, the city and the countryside will be safe. This very day, my arrow, its head like the *vajra* itself, will, loosed by my arm, pierce your heart, as does a ray of the sun, a lotus."

[8–10] Addressed in this fashion, Lavaṇa, beside himself with rage, hurled a huge tree at Śatrughna's chest. But that hero shattered it into a hundred pieces. Seeing his feat foiled, the mighty *rākṣasa* once again seized many trees and loosed them upon Śatrughna. But as for Śatrughna, who was filled with blazing energy, he cut down those many trees as they hurtled toward him, one after the other, with three or four straight arrows.

[11–13] Mighty Śatrughna then unleashed a hail of arrows on the *rākṣasa*'s chest. But the *rākṣasa* did not falter. Then, laughing, Lavaṇa easily tore up a tree and struck the hero on the head. The latter, his limbs gone slack, lost consciousness. When that hero had fallen, a great cry of "Alas! Alas!" arose from the seers and the hosts of gods and from the *gandharvas* and *apsarases* as well.

[14–15] Paying no further heed to Śatrughna, who had fallen, stricken, to the ground, the *rākṣasa* did not enter his residence, although he now had an opportunity to do so. Nor, having seen him fallen to the ground, did he get his lance. Instead, thinking him dead, he picked up his food.

[16–19] But Śatrughna regained consciousness after a short while and once more, holding his weapon, stood at the *rākṣasa*'s gate, being honored by the seers. He then took up that divine, unfailing foremost of arrows. It was fearsome, and it glowed with blazing energy with which it filled the ten directions. Its tip was the *vajra*, and its impact was that of the *vajra*. Its weight was that of Mount Meru and Mount Mandara. It was smooth at every joint, and it was undefeated in battles. Its shaft was smeared with blood and sandalwood paste. It was a beautifully fletched arrow that was terrifying to the *dānava* lords and the lords of the mountains and to the *asuras*.

[20–23] Seeing that arrow, which was blazing like the fire of universal destruction when the end of a cosmic era is at hand, all beings were

terrified. In great distress, the entire world, including the gods, *asuras*, *gandharvas*, sages, and the troupes of *apsarases*, approached Grandfather Brahmā. And they said to Great-Grandfather Brahmā, the bestower of boons and lord of the gods among gods: "Is it the end of the world, O God? Or has the end of the cosmic era come? We have never seen or heard anything like this, Great-Grandfather. O lord, the gods are dazed with terror at the thought of the destruction of the worlds."

[24–29] When Brahmā, grandfather of the worlds, had heard those words of theirs, he explained the cause of their fear, thus soothing the fear of the gods. "Foremost among the gods, it is just the arrow that has been taken up by Śatrughna for the destruction of Lavaṇa in battle. You have all been stupefied by its blazing energy. For this arrow, because of which this fear has come, my children, is the eternal one, consisting of blazing energy that belonged of old to the god who created the world. This mighty arrow was created by that great Lord on account of Kaiṭabha and Madhu in order to destroy those two *daityas*. Thus, you should know that this arrow consists of the blazing energy of Viṣṇu. And it is indeed the primordial body of great Viṣṇu. So go forth from here and watch as that foremost of *rākṣasas* Lavaṇa is slain by Rāma's great and heroic younger brother."

[30–31] When they had heard those pleasant words of that god of gods, they came to the place where Śatrughna and Lavaṇa were fighting. All beings gazed upon that arrow as it was held in Śatrughna's hand. With its divine radiance it resembled the fire that blazes up at the end of a cosmic era.

[32–34] First glancing at the sky, which was crowded with the gods, the delight of the Raghus repeatedly roared like a lion and turned his gaze once more to Lavaṇa. Then, challenged by great Śatrughna, Lavaṇa, filled with rage, approached for battle. Drawing his bowstring back to his ear, that foremost of bowmen released that great arrow toward Lavaṇa's chest. Swiftly tearing through his vast chest, it entered the underworld known as Rasātala.

[35–36] Worshiped by the wise gods, the divine arrow penetrated to Rasātala and returned swiftly to that delight of the Ikṣvāku lineage. Pierced by Śatrughna's arrow, the night-roaming *rākṣasa* Lavaṇa collapsed suddenly to the ground, like a mountain struck by a thunderbolt.

[37–38] And as for that great divine lance, once the *rākṣasa* Lavaṇa had been slain, it returned to the control of Rudra as all beings stood watching. Having struck down that terror of the three worlds with the blow of a single arrow, the great hero of the Raghus, with his bow and arrow raised, resembled the thousand-rayed sun when it has driven away the darkness.

Sarga 62

[1–3] Once Lavaṇa had been slain, the gods, together with Indra, placing Agni at their head, spoke very pleasant words to Śatrughna, scorcher of his foes: "Thank heavens you have been victorious, child! Thank heavens the *rākṣasa* Lavaṇa has been slain, tiger among men! Choose a boon, Rāghava. The granters of boons, who were anxious for your victory, are all assembled here, great-armed warrior. And a vision of us is never in vain."

[4–6] When the self-controlled hero, great-armed Śatrughna, had heard the words of the gods, he cupped his hands at his forehead in reverence and replied, "May I quickly obtain for my residence this lovely and charming city of Madhupurī, which was crafted by the gods. Let this boon, which I cherish, be mine." Delighted at heart, the gods said to Rāghava, "So be it! Without a doubt it shall become the lovely city of Śūrasenā."

[7–12] Having spoken in this fashion, the great gods then ascended to heaven. And Śatrughna of immense blazing energy sent for his army. Upon hearing Śatrughna's command, the army came at once, and Śatrughna, through his command, commenced the settlement. And in the twelfth year, that lovely city, with its divine radiance, was fully established, as was the realm of the Śūrasenas, which was free from any threat. Vāsava sent the rains at the proper season, and so the fields were filled with grain. And the city, under the protection of Śatrughna's arms, was free from disease and filled with heroic men. Resembling a half-moon, it was adorned by the bank of the Yamunā. It was adorned with splendid mansions and adorned with squares and markets. And with a varied abundance of goods that hero adorned the great palace that had earlier been left bare by Lavaṇa.

[13–14] Gazing upon that prosperous city, Śatrughna, Bharata's younger brother, his mission accomplished, was extremely pleased and experienced the greatest delight. Then, after he had founded the city of Madhurā, this thought occurred to him: "I would gaze upon Rāma's feet in this auspicious twelfth year."

Sarga 63

[1–2] Thus, in the twelfth year, Śatrughna desired to go—with a small retinue of retainers and troops—to Ayodhyā, which was under the protection of Rāma. Sending back his counselors, the leaders of the army, and his *purohita*, he went forth in an excellent chariot, which was radiant and yoked to horses.

[[k]3ab–appendix I, no. 9, ll. 1–5] Proceeding through seven or eight predetermined encampments, the immensely powerful delight of the Raghus reached the ashram of Vālmīki, where he made camp. Then that bull among men, having bowed reverentially to the feet of Vālmīki, accepted from the hands of the sage water for washing his feet, the guest-offering, and all that was fitting for a guest. And there the sage told great Śatrughna thousands of extremely sweet and varied stories.

[[l]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 6–11] The sage then said these words concerning the slaying of Lavaṇa: "This was an extremely difficult task, which your ancestors could not accomplish. Gentle Śatrughna, many great kings were destroyed, along with their troops and mounts, in fighting with the evil-minded Lavaṇa. But you, bull among men, easily slew that evil creature. Through your blazing energy, your majesty, the terror of the world has been put to rest.

[[m]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 12–19] "The frightful slaying of Rāvaṇa was accomplished with great effort. You, however, accomplished this extremely great feat effortlessly. When Lavaṇa was slain, the gods experienced tremendous delight, and delight was also generated for the world and all its beings. And I myself witnessed that battle just as it happened, bull among men, as I was seated in the assembly of great Vāsava. Thus, Śatrughna, you have increased my great joy as well, and so I shall kiss you on the head, for that is the highest expression of affection."

[[n]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 20–27] When the great sage had spoken in this fashion, he kissed Śatrughna on the head and extended his hospitality to him and to those who were his followers. After that foremost of men had eaten, he heard, sweetly rendered in song, the supreme tale of Rāma, in due order, just as it had occurred at that time. Upon hearing those words, so consonant with the truth and in accordance with what had happened long ago, that tiger among men, his eyes filled with tears, lost consciousness. After remaining unconscious for a short while, he sighed again and again,

and, while the poem was still being sung, he heard that tale of the past as if it were happening right then.

[[o]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 28–33] And as for those who were the king's followers, when they heard the magnificence of the singing, they were despondent and hung their heads and said, "This is wonderful!" The soldiers there said to one another: "What is this? Where are we? Is this an illusion or a vision in a dream? This history that we witnessed long ago, we are now once again hearing in an ashram! Is this magnificent musical composition taking place in a dream?"

[[p]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 34–41] Having experienced the greatest wonder, they said this to Śatrughna: "Best of men, please straightaway inquire of Vālmīki, that bull among sages." But Śatrughna said to all of those soldiers, who were filled with curiosity: "It would be improper for us to ask such a thing. There are many miracles here in the ashram of the sage. It would not be proper for me to ask about them simply out of curiosity." And when the delight of the Raghus had spoken these words to the soldiers, he respectfully saluted the great seer and then went to his own quarters.

[[q]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 42–45] But sleep would not come to that tiger among men as he lay there, preoccupied, pondering that unsurpassed song about Rāma. Thus, the night passed swiftly for great Śatrughna, once he had heard those immensely sweet words accompanied by stringed and percussion instruments.

[[r]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 46–49] When the night had passed and he had completed his morning activities, Śatrughna cupped his hands in reverence and spoke these words to that bull among sages: "Holy one, I wish to see Rāghava, the delight of the Raghus. I wish to be given leave by you and these sages of severe vows."

[[s]Appendix I, no. 9, ll. 50–52; 3cd] As the Rāghava Śatrughna, destroyer of his foes, was speaking in this fashion, Vālmīki embraced him and gave him leave. And he, after respectfully saluting that foremost of sages, mounted his very splendid chariot and, in his longing to see Rāghava, proceeded swiftly to Ayodhyā.

[4–8] Upon entering that delightful city, the great-armed and majestic delight of the Ikṣvākus entered the assembly hall where Rāma of tremendous radiance sat. Having reverentially saluted the great and truly valorous Rāma, who seemed to glow with blazing energy, he cupped his

hands in reverence and said to him: “I have done everything that was commanded, great king. Evil Lavaṇa has been slain and that city has been populated. And the twelfth year has now gone by without you, delight of the Raghus. I can no longer bear to live apart from you, O king. Please be gracious to me, Kākutstha of immeasurable valor. For I cannot live apart from you any more than can a calf deprived of its mother.”

[9–13] As Śatrughna was speaking in this fashion, Rāma embraced him and said this: “Do not be despondent, hero. This is not the conduct of a kshatriya. Kings do not despair while living abroad, Rāghava, and, Rāghava, one’s subjects must indeed be protected according to the code of the kshatriyas. But you may come from time to time, hero, to visit me and Ayodhyā. However, you will have to go back to your city, best of men. You too are, without doubt, as dear to me as life itself. Nonetheless, the protection of the kingdom must be attended to. Therefore, Kākutstha, you may stay with me for five nights. After that, you will have to go back to Madhurā together with your retainers, troops, and mounts.”

[14–17] When Śatrughna had heard these heartfelt words of Rāma, which were in keeping with righteousness, Śatrughna said in a voice filled with sorrow, “So be it.” And so, having dwelt there for five nights according to Rāghava’s command, the great bowman Kākutstha prepared to depart. Taking his leave of great and truly valorous Rāma, as well as of Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa, he mounted his great chariot. Accompanied for a great distance by both great Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata, Śatrughna then proceeded swiftly to his own city.

Sarga 64

[1–3] Once he had sent Śatrughna away, Rāghava, delighted, enjoyed himself, along with his other two brothers, ruling the kingdom in accordance with righteousness. But after several days, an aged brahman of that country approached the royal gate, holding the dead body of a child. Wailing various lamentations filled with loving words and crying, “My son! My son!” over and over, he said these words:

[4–7] “What evil deed must I have done in the past in some previous birth that I must see you, my only son, in the grip of death? For you, my little son, are a mere child but five years old and have not yet reached manhood. Yet, to my grief, you have come to an untimely death. In a few

days, your mother and I will doubtless too be in the grip of death out of grief for you, my little son. I do not recall any lie that I have uttered nor any harm that I have done. For what evil deed of mine, then, has my son, a mere child, been led this day to the abode of Vaivasvata without having completed my obsequial rites?

[8–9] “I have never before seen or even heard of such a dreadful thing as an untimely death in Rāma’s realm. Without a doubt, it must be that there is some great misdeed on Rāma’s part. Your majesty, you must restore this child to life as he has come under the sway of death.

[10–15] “May you attain long life together with your brothers, your majesty, as we have always dwelt happily in this kingdom of yours, immensely powerful prince. But now the realm of the great Ikṣvākus has no protector since it has acquired for its protector Rāma, a king who brings about the death of its children. Subjects who are not governed according to law perish through the transgressions of their king. And when the king is one whose conduct is unrighteous, people die before their time. And when the people in the towns and in the countryside act improperly, and yet there is no one to prevent them, then there is fear of death. It is perfectly clear beyond any doubt that either in the city or the countryside there must have been some transgression on the part of the king, and thus, there has been the death of a child.” Thus reviling the king over and over again with many different words, the brahman, consumed with sorrow, embraced his son.

Sarga 65

[1–6] And thus did Rāma hear that twice-born brahman’s entire piteous lamentation, so filled with sorrow and grief. Wholly consumed with sorrow, he summoned his counselors, as well as Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, and his brothers, together with the vedic brahmans. The eight twice-born brahmans were ushered in together with Vasiṣṭha, and they addressed the king, who was as resplendent as a god, saying, “May you prosper!” All of those bulls among the twice-born brahmans—Mārkaṇḍeya, Maudgalya, Vāmadeva, Kāśyapa, Kātyāyana, Jābāli, Gautama, and Nārada—were seated on cushions, as were the counselors and the vedic brahmans, in proper fashion, according to their merit. Once all of those men of fiercely blazing energy had been seated, Rāghava told them everything about why the twice-born brahman was wailing.

[7–10] Now, when Nārada had heard those words of the dejected king, he responded to him with these auspicious words there in the presence of the seers: "Listen, your majesty, to how this untimely death of a child has come about. Once you have heard it, heroic delight of the Raghus, you must do what needs to be done. In the beginning, Rāma, in the Kṛta Yuga, only brahmans were ascetics. At that time, your majesty, a non-brahman could by no means be an ascetic. In that resplendent age, unshrouded by darkness, in which brahmans were preeminent, all were immortal and farsighted.

[11–14] "Next came the age called the Tretā Yuga, the age of men of powerful bodies. In that age, kshatriyas became able to practice the asceticism of that previous age. And compared to those great men in that age known as the Tretā Yuga, those in the preceding age were superior to them in both strength and asceticism. The brahmans were superior and the kshatriyas were inferior in every respect. But over the course of the two *yugas*, they came to be equal in power. Then, unable to perceive any great difference between the brahmans and kshatriyas, all the authorities instituted regulations that governed all four social classes to address this.

[15–18] "Nonetheless, unrighteousness set one foot on the earth, so that, through association with that unrighteousness, the twice-born ones became diminished. Then there appeared for the first time a limit to the span of life, so that people performed only auspicious acts and were devoted to truth and righteousness. But in the Tretā Yuga those who were brahmans and kshatriyas practiced asceticism, while other people were engaged in serving them. And that, which was allotted to the *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*, came to be their highest righteous duty. But it was the *śūdras* especially who revered all the other three classes.

[19–22] "Then unrighteousness set down its second foot. And thus, that *yuga* came to be known as the Dvāpara. And, bull among men, both unrighteousness and agriculture increased in that *yuga* reckoned as the Dvāpara, which came to be their basis. And in the *yuga* known as the Dvāpara, the practice of asceticism was extended to the *vaiśyas*. But the *śūdra* did not gain access to that practice—that is, to the performance of severe austerities—O bull among men. But eventually a person of the lowest class, O best of kings, will be able to perform very great asceticism. Indeed, the practice of asceticism in the future, that is, in the Kali Yuga, will be extended to those of the *śūdra* class.

[23–26] “The practice of asceticism by a *śūdra*, even in the Dvāpara, Rāma, is a severe violation of righteousness. Surely then, your majesty, some wicked *śūdra*, having become a great ascetic, is practicing austerities in some corner of your realm. And it is because of this that there has been the death of a child. For any evil-minded man who commits an unrighteous or forbidden act in the city or country of a king, O tiger among kings, goes swiftly to hell, as does that king. Of this there is no doubt. So you, tiger among men, must search your realm, and wherever you see any evil being done, you must take forceful action. In this way, your righteousness will increase and so will the life span of men, foremost of kings, and this child will live once more.”

Sarga 66

[1–4] When Rāma had heard those words of Nārada, which consisted, so it seemed, of the nectar of immortality, he experienced unequaled delight, and he said this to Lakṣmaṇa: “Go, gentle Lakṣmaṇa, and console that foremost of twice-born brahmans. Then have him place the boy’s body in a vat of oil. See to it, gentle brother, that the child’s body is placed there together with fine fragrances and highly aromatic oils so that it does not decompose. And you must act in such a way that there will be no destruction or disintegration of the body of this innocent boy while it is being preserved.”

[5–7] When greatly illustrious Kākutstha had instructed Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious marks in this fashion, he called to mind the Puṣpaka with the thought, “Come!” When the Puṣpaka, adorned with gold, perceived Rāghava’s intentions, it came at once into his very presence. Bowing humbly, he said, “It is I, great-armed lord of men, your obedient servant, who has come.”

[8–11] Upon hearing those welcome words of the Puṣpaka, the lord of men respectfully saluted those great seers, and he then boarded the flying palace. Taking up his bow, his quiver, and his brightly gleaming sword, he entrusted the city to those two heroes, Saumitri and Bharata, and proceeded to the west, searching the wastelands on every side. Then the majestic hero turned to the northern quarter, which is bounded by the Himalayas. Not finding even the most minor transgression there, the lord of men inspected the entire eastern region as well.

[12–13] Then the delight of the royal seers traversed the southern quarter, where he spied a very large lake on the northern slopes of Mount Śaivala. Close to the lake, majestic Rāghava spied an ascetic hanging upside down while performing very severe austerities.

[14–17] Approaching him who was performing supreme austerities, Rāghava spoke these words: “You are fortunate, O you of excellent vows. To which of the four classes do you belong, you who are advanced in asceticism and of firm resolve? I, Rāma Dāśarathi, am asking you out of curiosity. Whether it be the attainment of heaven or the acquisition of a boon, I wish to hear, ascetic, about the goal in connection with which you have been practicing austerities. Pray, are you a brahman or are you an invincible kshatriya? Or if you are a *vaiśya* or a *śūdra*, you must tell me that truthfully.”

Sarga 67

[1–4] Upon hearing that speech of Rāma, who was tireless in action, he spoke these words while still hanging upside down: “I was born into the *śūdra* class, and I am engaged in severe austerities. For, greatly glorious Rāma, I desire the status of a god in this very body. I would not speak falsely, your majesty, out of my desire to win the world of the gods. Know me, Kākutstha, to be a *śūdra* known by the name Śambūka.” But even as the *śūdra* was speaking, Rāghava drew his spotless and brightly gleaming sword from its sheath and cut off his head.

[[t]Appendix I, no. 11, ll. 1–8] Once that *śūdra* had been slain, the gods, together with Indra and with Agni at their head, praised Kākutstha over and over again, crying, “Excellent! Excellent!” And a great shower of flowers made up of extremely fragrant and heavenly blossoms fell on all sides, scattered by the wind. Exceedingly pleased, the gods said to truly valorous Rāma: “Wise and gentle Rāma, you have splendidly carried out this deed on behalf of the gods. Please accept a boon, gentle Rāma, whichever one you wish, tamer of your foes, since because of you, delight of the Raghus, this *śūdra* will not enjoy heaven.”

[[u]Appendix I, no. 11, ll. 9–16] After listening with great concentration to the speech of the gods, Rāghava cupped his hands in reverence and spoke these words to thousand-eyed Indra, smasher of citadels: “If the gods are pleased with me, let the son of the twice-born brahman live. Let them

ordain for me this boon, which is my most cherished desire. It was through my transgression that this child, the brahman's only son, whose time had not come, was led by Kāla to the abode of Vaivasvata. Now, bless you, you must make him live. I promised that twice-born brahman this: 'I will restore your son to life.' You ought not prove me false."

[[v]Appendix I, no. 11, ll. 17–5ab] Now, when the foremost among the wise gods had heard these words of Rāghava, they were delighted with an abundance of delight, and they replied to that great hero: "Rest assured, Kākutstha, this very day, surrounded by his kinsmen, that little child has once more come to life. At the very moment that the *śūdra* was struck down, Kākutstha, the child was restored to life.

[[w]1127* ll. 1–6] "Bless you, may you obtain prosperity! We have accomplished our purpose, bull among men. We shall visit the ashram of Agastya, illustrious prince. The religious observances of that immensely illustrious brahman-seer are now completed. For the twelfth year has passed while he was practicing devotions underwater. We shall go there, Kākutstha, to pay our respects to the sage. Bless you! You too should go to see that foremost of seers."

[[x]1127* ll. 7–10] Having promised the gods with the words, "So be it!" the delight of the Raghus mounted the flying palace Puṣpaka, which was adorned with gold. Then the gods set out in their vast flying palaces, while Rāma swiftly followed them to the penance grove of the pot-born sage Agastya.

[[y]1127* ll. 11–15; 1128*] When righteous Agastya, that treasure-house of austerities, saw that the gods had arrived, he honored them all without distinction. When they had accepted that reverence from him and had reverenced that great sage in return, the thirty gods, delighted, returned to the highest heaven, along with their attendants. Once they had gone, Kākutstha, having descended from the Puṣpaka, then respectfully greeted Agastya, foremost of seers. [[z]**Verse 6 elided]**

[7–13] After he had respectfully saluted that great sage, who seemed to glow with blazing energy, the lord of men received the greatest hospitality and took his seat. The pot-born sage of great austerities and immense blazing energy said to him: "Welcome, Rāghava, foremost of men. It is fortunate that you have come. I hold you in high esteem for your many excellent virtues. A guest must be honored and, your majesty, you dwell in

my heart. For the gods had informed me that you had come to kill that *śūdra* and that, through your righteousness, you have restored the brahman's son to life. Please spend the night here with me, Rāghava. At daybreak, you will go in the Puṣpaka to your own city. And please, dear Rāghava Kākutstha, favor me and accept this ornament, which was fashioned by Viśvakarman. It is celestial with its celestial beauty, and it shines with its own blazing radiance. For it is said that the giving away of something that has been given brings great benefits. Therefore, I would duly give it. Please accept it, bull among men."

[14–17] And Rāma accepted the great sage's splendid celestial ornament, which resembled the blazing sun, bringer of light. Once Rāma had accepted that unsurpassed ornament, he began to ask the sage how the celestial jewel had come to be his: "How and from where, brahman, did you, holy one, acquire this extremely marvelous and splendid thing, so filled with beauty? And who brought it? It is out of curiosity, brahman, that I ask you, who are so greatly illustrious. For you, sir, are the greatest treasure-house of many wonders."

[18] As Kākutstha was speaking in this fashion, the sage said these words: "Listen, Rāma, to what took place long ago in a bygone Tretā Yuga."

Sarga 68

[1–3] "Long ago, in that Tretā Yuga, there was a vast forest tract, a hundred leagues in every direction. It was devoid of birds and beasts. As I was performing severe austerities in an uninhabited region of the forest, dear boy, I wandered about that forest in order to explore it. I cannot describe the beauty of that forest with its succulent fruits and roots and with its many different kinds of trees.

[4–6] "In the middle of that forest, there was a lake that was a league across. It was filled with red and blue lotuses and covered with waterweeds. It was truly like a wonder. It was magnificent, and its waters were pleasant to the taste. It was limpid, calm, and lovely, and it was filled with flocks of birds. And near that lake, there was a great and marvelous ashram. It was ancient and extremely sacred. But it was devoid of ascetics.

[7–9] "I spent a summer night there, bull among men, and, rising early in the morning, went down to the lake. Then, at a certain spot, I spied a

corpse. It was quite plump and showed no signs of decay. Still exuding a splendid vital glow, it was lying in that body of water. I stood there, on the shore of the lake, for some time, Lord Rāghava, pondering this matter and thinking, ‘What can this be?’

[10–14] “But then, after some time, I spied a magnificent celestial flying palace. Yoked to *haṃsas* and as swift as thought, it was a wonder to behold. And there in that flying palace, heroic delight of the Raghus, a thousand *apsarases* with celestial ornaments attentively waited upon a heavenly being. Some of them sang delightful songs, while others played musical instruments. Then, even as I watched, Rāma, delight of the Raghus, that heavenly being descended from the flying palace and began to eat the corpse. Then, when he had eaten duly and abundantly of that flesh to his heart’s content, the heavenly being went down into the lake and began to wash. After having washed in the proper fashion, bull among men, the celestial being began to mount that excellent and splendid flying palace.

[15–17] “Then, looking up at that godlike being as he mounted, I spoke words to him in this fashion, bull among men: ‘Who are you, sir? And why, gentle sir, are you eating this abominable food? Please tell me. What an extraordinary thing—on the one hand, such a splendid being, virtually a god, and on the other, this abominable food! Gentle friend, I wish to hear about this truthfully.’ ”

Sarga 69

[1–4] “When that heavenly being had heard the pleasant speech that I had spoken, he cupped his hands in reverence and replied thus, delight of the Raghus: ‘Since you are asking me, twice-born brahman, listen to these inescapable events and how they led to both my felicity and my misery. Long ago my father, the illustrious and mighty Sudeva, was the king of Vidarbha and was renowned throughout the three worlds. Two sons were born to him, brahman, by his two wives. I am known as Śveta and the younger was Suratha.

[5–10] “ ‘Then, when my father had ascended to heaven, the people consecrated me as king. And there, with great attentiveness, I ruled the kingdom righteously. And thus, brahman of excellent vows, thousands of years passed while I ruled the kingdom righteously, protecting my subjects. Having come to know the length of my life by virtue of a certain sign,

foremost of twice-born brahmans, I retired to the forest, keeping my mortality in mind. And I entered this inaccessible forest devoid of beasts and birds in order to practice austerities in the lovely environs of the lake. After consecrating my brother, Suratha, in the kingdom as the lord of men, I came to this lake and practiced austerities for a long time. And after practicing the most severe austerities for three thousand years, great sage, I attained the unsurpassed Brahmaloka.

[11–13] " 'But then, foremost of twice-born brahmans, while I was dwelling in heaven, hunger and thirst afflicted me. Because of that, supremely noble sage, my senses were reeling. I went to Grandfather Brahmā, who is foremost in the three worlds, and said: "Blessed one, the Brahmaloka should be free from hunger and thirst. Of what action is this the outcome that I am nonetheless subjected to hunger and thirst? What shall be my food, O God? Tell me that, Grandfather."

[14–19] " 'But Grandfather Brahmā said to me: "Your food, son of Sudeva, will be your own sweet flesh. You must eat that perpetually. While you were performing severe austerities, you nourished merely your own body. What is not sown, extremely wise Śveta, can never grow. You did not give even the smallest donation in that forest frequented by creatures. It is because of that, my child, that, even though you have reached heaven, you are afflicted by hunger and thirst. Now you must eat your own splendid body that has been well nourished with food and which will taste like the nectar of immortality. It will satisfy your hunger. But, Śveta, when the very great seer, the unassailable Agastya, shall set foot in this forest, you shall be freed from this hideous fate. For, gentle Śveta, he is able to save even the hosts of the gods, what to say of you, great-armed king, who are subject to hunger and thirst."

[20–23] " 'Having heard the pronouncement of the blessed god of gods, I take my own body as my abominable food, foremost among twice-born brahmans. I have been eating it, O brahman, for many multitudes of years, but still it never diminishes. And this, brahman-seer, is the ultimate satisfaction of my hunger. You must release me, who have fallen into this wretched state because of this hideous fate. For no one other than you, a twice-born sage born from a pot, could have come here. Please accept this ornament, gentle foremost of twice-born brahmans, for saving me. Please, brahman-seer, be gracious.'

[24–27] “Upon hearing that heavenly being’s words, so laden with misery, I accepted that magnificent ornament for the sake of saving him. No sooner had I accepted that splendid ornament than the former human body of the royal seer vanished. Once that body had vanished, the king, that royal seer, with the greatest delight, once more departed for the highest heaven gratified and overjoyed. It was for this reason, Kākutstha, that that person, who was equal to Śakra, gave me this celestial ornament, marvelous to behold.”

Sarga 70

[1–3] When Rāghava had heard that most astonishing speech of Agastya, he began to question him once again out of respect for him as a *guru* as well as out of his amazement. “Holy one, how did that fearsome forest where Śveta, the king of Vidarbha, practiced austerities come to be devoid of animals and birds? And how is it that in order to practice austerities he entered that forest that had become deserted, devoid of creatures, and without any people? I wish to hear this just as it happened.”

[4–6] When that sage of supremely blazing energy had heard Rāma’s words, so filled with curiosity, he began to speak these words: “Long ago, Rāma, in the Kṛta Yuga, Lord Manu wielded the rod of punishment. His son was the great Ikṣvāku, the increaser of his lineage. Manu established his invincible son in his former kingdom and said to him, ‘May you be the founder of royal lineages on earth.’

[7–10] “And, Rāghava, the son promised his father, saying, ‘So be it.’ Then Manu, supremely delighted, spoke again: ‘I am pleased, supremely illustrious son, there is no doubt that you shall be the founder. You must protect your subjects with the rod of punishment, but let that rod not be used without good cause. The rod of punishment, when employed properly and brought down upon men who have committed crimes, leads a king to heaven. Therefore, my great-armed son, you must be diligent with respect to the rod of punishment. For if you do this, the greatest righteousness will be yours.’

[11–13] “When Manu had thus instructed his son copiously and attentively, he went in great happiness to the highest heaven, that is, the unsurpassed Brahmaloka. And once he had departed for the highest heaven, Ikṣvāku, of immeasurable splendor, was given over to brooding, thinking,

‘How can I father sons?’ Then, by means of various sacrificial rites, Manu’s righteous son fathered a hundred sons, who were equal to the sons of the gods.

[14–16] “Now, dear boy, delight of the Raghus, the youngest of them all was stupid and ignorant and did not obey his elder brothers. Foreseeing that the rod of punishment [*daṇḍa*] would inevitably fall upon the body of that dullard, his father gave him the name ‘Daṇḍa.’ Perceiving his son’s terrible defect, Rāghava, tamer of your foes, he gave him a kingdom between the Vindhya and the Śaivala mountains.

[17–19] “And so, Rāma, Daṇḍa became king there, and he founded an incomparable and unsurpassed city on the lovely slopes of the mountains. He gave that city the name Madhumanta, lord, and he chose Uśanas of excellent vows as his *purohita*. And thus the king, together with his *purohita*, ruled that kingdom, which was filled with happy people, as if it were the kingdom of the gods in heaven.”

Sarga 71

[1] When the great pot-born seer had related this to Rāma, he continued with the next part of the story.

[2–4] “And there, Kākutstha, for many tens of thousands of years the dull-witted Daṇḍa ruled that kingdom, which was free from all troubles. Now once, during the delightful month of Caitra, the king visited the charming ashram of Bhārgava. And there Daṇḍa spied Bhārgava’s daughter wandering in the woodlands. She was unsurpassed and had no equal on earth in beauty.

[5–6] “Upon seeing her, that extremely dull-witted king was smitten by the arrows of Anaṅga, and, in great agitation, he approached the girl and said these words: ‘Where are you from, lovely, fair-hipped girl? And whose daughter are you? Smitten as I am by Anaṅga, I ask you, my fair-waisted one.’

[7–11] “But even as the lustful king was speaking in this fashion, intoxicated in his infatuation, the Bhārgava girl replied to him with these courteous words: ‘You must know me to be the eldest daughter of the godlike Bhārgava, tireless in action. My name, lord of kings, is Arajā, and I dwell here in the ashram. My father is your *guru*, lord of kings, and you are a disciple of that great sage. If he were to be angered, that sage of great

austerities would inflict a very great calamity upon you. If, however, you are to do this with me according to the path of the virtuous, which is fixed according to righteousness, then, foremost of kings, you must petition my immensely glorious father. Otherwise, there would be dreadful consequences for you, since, with his anger, my father could burn up even the three worlds.'

[12–14] "Now as Arajā was speaking in this fashion, Daṇḍa, smitten by the arrows of Kāma and intoxicated with desire, cupped his hands to his forehead and said to her: 'Be gracious, fair-hipped girl, you must not let this moment pass. For, my fair-faced one, my very life is being torn apart on your account. As long as I have you, let me suffer death or dreadful sin. So love me, timid one, your lover, who loves you to distraction.'

[15–17] "Having spoken in this fashion, the powerful king seized the girl forcibly with both arms and began to rape her at will as she struggled. Once he had done this evil, very dreadful, and extremely horrifying thing, Daṇḍa went immediately to the unsurpassed city of Madhumanta. But as for Arajā, weeping and terrified, she waited for her father not far from the ashram."

Sarga 72

[1–3] "Now after a short time, the divine seer of immeasurable splendor, afflicted with hunger and surrounded by his disciples, returned to his ashram having heard about what had happened. He spied Arajā. Desolate and covered with blood, she had lost her radiance like the moonlight swallowed up in the morning by the red dawn. And his anger flared up—all the more so as he was afflicted by hunger—as if to consume the three worlds, and he said this to his disciples:

[4–6] " 'Now witness the destruction—as dreadful to look upon as a raging flame of fire—of this perverse and ignorant Daṇḍa. This evil fool, who dared to touch the blazing flame of fire, eater of oblations, now faces destruction, along with his followers. Since this fool has committed such a sin, so dreadful to contemplate, he must therefore reap the fruit of his evil act.

[7–10] " 'In seven nights this stupid king, who performs such evil acts, will meet his death, along with his retainers, troops, and mounts. With an immense dust storm, Indra, the chastiser of Pāka, will parch that fool's kingdom for a hundred leagues all around. Every living thing that is here,

both fixed and moving, will be completely destroyed by that immense dust storm. After seven nights, every living thing throughout the length and breadth of Daṇḍa's realm will become invisible as if made of dust.'

[11–12] "When, inflamed with anger, he had spoken in this fashion, he told the people who dwelt in the ashram, 'You must now stay beyond the borders of this country.' When the people who dwelt in the ashram had heard those words of Uśanas, they departed from Daṇḍa's realm and made their residence outside of it.

[13–15] "After he had spoken to the sages in this fashion, he said this to Arajā: 'You must stay here in the ashram, you stupid girl, engaged in profound meditation. This lake, however, will remain brilliantly clear for the distance of a league around. Enjoying it without anxiety, Arajā, you must wait here for the proper time. And whatever creatures may come to dwell for the night in your vicinity will be forever spared from the dust storm.'

[16–18] "After Bhārgava had spoken in this fashion, he took up his residence elsewhere. And after seven days, just as that expounder of Brahman had predicted, everything was reduced to ashes. This is that very realm of Daṇḍa lying between the peaks of the Vindhya and Śaivala mountains. It was cursed by the brahman-seer long ago when that violation of righteousness had been committed. And ever since that time, Kākutstha, it has been called the Daṇḍaka forest, while the area where the ascetics stayed likewise became 'Janasthāna.'

[19–21] "I have now told you all of that about which you asked me, Rāghava. Now, hero, the time for performing the *sandhyā* rites is passing. All around us, all these great seers, their water pots filled, have performed their ablutions and are worshiping the sun. And those seers, the foremost of brahmans, all together are hymning the sun as it is about to set, Rāma. Now go and perform your ablutions."

Sarga 73

[1–4] Heeding the words of the seer, Rāma approached that holy lake, frequented by *apsarases*, to perform the *sandhyā* rites. After having completed his ablutions and having performed the evening *sandhyā* rites, Rāma entered the ashram of the great pot-born sage. And Agastya arranged many kinds of fruits and roots as well as herbs and wholesome vegetables

for his meal. When the foremost of men had eaten that food, which was like the nectar of immortality, he spent the night there, pleased and satisfied.

[5–7] After rising early in the morning and performing his daily rituals, the foremost of the Raghus, tamer of his foes, approached the seer for permission to depart. Respectfully saluting the great pot-born seer, Rāma said: "I would depart, and so I beg of you, please grant me leave. I am blessed, and I am graced by the sight of such a great personage as you, and I shall return here to see you in order to purify myself."

[8–12] As Kākutstha was thus speaking these words—so marvelous to apprehend—the sage, so rich in austerities, who viewed all through the eye of righteousness, was supremely delighted, and he said: "Your words, Rāma, are extremely wonderful, each of their syllables mellifluous. It is you alone, delight of the Raghus, who purify all the worlds. And all who see you, Rāma, even for a mere moment, are purified and attain heaven, where they are worshiped by the divinities. But those living beings on earth who look upon you with an inimical eye are struck down by the rod of Yama and go straight to hell. So go safely and confidently on your journey, free from all dangers. Rule the kingdom in accordance with righteousness. For you, sir, are the recourse of all the world."

[13–16] Addressed in this fashion by the sage, the wise king extended his arms with his hands cupped in reverence and respectfully saluted that seer of holy conduct. Then, after respectfully saluting that foremost of sages and all those sages, so rich in austerities, he calmly mounted the Puṣpaka, which was adorned with gold. And as he, who was like great Indra, was departing, the hosts of sages on every side honored him with blessings, just as the immortal gods might thousand-eyed Indra. Comfortably mounted in the Puṣpaka, which was adorned with gold, Rāma resembled the hare-marked moon abutting the clouds at the onset of the rainy season.

[17–19] Then, at midday, Kākutstha, who was honored all along the way, reached Ayodhyā and descended from the flying palace. After dismissing the resplendent Puṣpaka, which moved at its master's will, Rāma spoke these words to the gatekeeper who was posted in the inner courtyard: "Go to swift-striding Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata, report my arrival, and summon them without delay."

Sarga 74

[1–2] When the gatekeeper had heard that speech of Rāma, who was tireless in action, he summoned the two princes and then informed Rāma. Upon seeing that his beloved Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa had arrived, Rāma embraced them and spoke these words:

[3–7] "I have faithfully accomplished this unsurpassed task for the twice-born brahman. And therefore, Rāghavas, I now wish to firmly establish the bulwark of righteousness. I wish to perform the unsurpassed *rājasūya* together with both of you, who are my second selves, for in this lies everlasting righteousness. For it was by sacrificing with the *rājasūya* rite, accompanied by excellent oblations and excellent subsidiary rites, that Mitra, destroyer of his foes, attained the position of Varuṇa. And it was by sacrificing with the *rājasūya* rite in accordance with righteousness that Soma, who knew righteousness, attained fame among all the worlds and an eternal domain. You must carefully consider with me what would be best at this time, and you must state prudently what would be beneficial in the time to come."

[8–14] When Bharata, skillful in speech, had heard these words of Rāghava, he cupped his hands in reverence and said these words: "In you, noble brother, resides the highest righteousness. On you rests the entire earth, the bearer of wealth. And in you, great-armed prince of measureless valor, abides glory. Just as the immortal gods look upon Prajāpati, all the great kings, those protectors of the earth, look upon you as the lord of the world, as do we as well. And the people regard you as their father, immensely powerful king. Rāghava, you are the refuge of all living beings on earth as well. Therefore, your majesty, how can you undertake such a sacrifice, which would witness the destruction of the royal lineages on earth? For in the performance of that, your majesty, the annihilation—like the universal destruction—of all men on earth who have attained manly valor will come to pass. Tiger among men, you who are of unequaled valor through your virtues should not destroy the earth, for it is already under your sway."

[15–19] When truly valorous Rāma had heard that speech of Bharata, which seemed to consist of the nectar of immortality, he experienced unequaled delight. And he said these splendid words to the increaser of Kaikeyī's joy: "I am indeed pleased and gratified by your words this day. These words in conformity with righteousness, which you have boldly

uttered, tiger among men, will be the salvation of the earth. Because of your excellent speech, knower of righteousness, I will surely desist from that intention of mine, which was to perform that foremost of rites, the *rājasūya*. Protection of the people is a duty of kings on a par with sacrifice. Therefore, I shall heed your words, which were so well spoken and finely articulated."

Sarga 75

[1–3] Once Rāma and great Bharata had spoken in this fashion, Lakṣmaṇa too spoke splendid words, to the delight of the Raghus: "The great sacrifice, the *aśvamedha*, purifies one of all sins. May this foremost of sacrifices, which is both incomparable and sanctifying, please you. For we have heard this ancient tale concerning the very great Śakra Vāsava. Once, when he was overwhelmed by the sin of *brahmahatyā*, killing a brahman, he was purified by the *aśvamedha*.

[4–8] "They say that long ago, great-armed brother, when the gods and the *asuras* had come together, there was a great descendant of Diti named Vṛtra, who was highly regarded throughout the worlds. He was a hundred leagues in breadth and three times that in height, and, in his affection, he looked fondly upon all the three worlds. Knowing righteousness and proper conduct and perfected through his intellect, he ruled the entire earth single-mindedly and in accordance with righteousness. At that time, while he was ruling, the earth produced every desirable thing. And the roots and fruits that were produced were succulent. That great being's land was extremely rich, and it brought forth crops without cultivation. And such was the prosperous kingdom, wonderful to behold, that he enjoyed.

[9–10] "Then an idea occurred to him: 'I must practice unexcelled austerities. For austerity is the greatest good. For austerity is the greatest happiness.' Having set his eldest son as supreme ruler over his subjects, he performed severe austerities, thus causing anxiety to all the divinities.

[11–15] "Now, while Vṛtra was engaged in austerities, Vāsava was extremely distressed. He approached Viṣṇu and said these words: 'Through practicing austerities, O great-armed lord, Vṛtra has conquered the worlds. For he is mighty and righteous and I am unable to oppose him. If he should continue to perform austerities, O lord of the gods, then, as long as the worlds may endure, they will remain under his control. And yet, immensely

powerful Lord, you ignore that supremely exalted one. For surely Vṛtra could not survive for even a moment if you were angry with him. For ever since he attained this amicable relationship with you, Viṣṇu, he has enjoyed the lordship of the worlds.

[16–18] " 'Immensely illustrious Lord, you must extend your grace to the world. For it is only through your action that the whole world may be at peace and free from dissolution. All the gods, denizens of heaven, look to you, Viṣṇu. You must render assistance to them through the great feat of killing Vṛtra. Indeed, you have always rendered assistance to these great divinities. This feat is impossible for others. You, sir, are the refuge of those who have no other refuge.' "

Sarga 76

[1–2] When Rāma, the destroyer of his foes, had heard those words of Lakṣmaṇa, he said to him, "Please tell me in full about the slaying of Vṛtra." Addressed in this fashion by Rāghava, Lakṣmaṇa, increaser of Sumitrā's joy, resumed his narration of that celestial tale.

[3–7] "Once Viṣṇu had heard those words of thousand-eyed Indra and of all the gods, denizens of heaven, he said this to all of them, who were led by Indra: 'I have long been bound by ties of affection to the very great Vṛtra. Because of that, I will surely not kill that great *asura* as a favor to you. However, I must certainly fulfill your ultimate desire. Therefore, I shall tell you the means whereby you shall slay Vṛtra. I shall divide myself into three parts. In this way, there is no doubt that thousand-eyed Indra will kill Vṛtra. Let one portion enter Indra Vāsava, the second the *vajra*, and the third the earth. After that, Śakra will slay Vṛtra.'

[8–9] "Now as the lord of the gods was speaking in this fashion, the gods spoke these words: 'Without a doubt, O slayer of the *daityas*, it will happen thus, just as you say. May blessings be upon you. We shall depart, eagerly anticipating the slaying of the *asura* Vṛtra. O supremely noble lord, endow Vāsava with your own blazing energy.'

[10–11] "Then all the great gods, led by thousand-eyed Indra, proceeded to the forest where the great *asura* Vṛtra was. They saw the foremost of the *asuras* engaged in austerities. Suffused with blazing energy, he seemed as if to consume the three worlds and to scorch the very heavens.

[12–14] “At the mere sight of that foremost of *asuras*, the gods were terrified. And just as they were thinking, ‘How will we kill him? How will we not suffer defeat?’ thousand-eyed Indra, smasher of citadels, seized his *vajra* with both hands and hurled it at Vṛtra’s head. As it fell on Vṛtra’s head, that fearsome weapon blazed, as it were, with great flames like the fire of universal destruction. Seared by that weapon, the whole world was terrified.

[15–16] “But brooding about his unimaginable killing of Vṛtra, the illustrious lord of the wise gods fled to the ends of the earth. Nonetheless, even as Indra fled, the sin of *brahmahatyā*, killing a brahman, pursued him and fell upon his limbs. Then misery took hold of Indra.

[17–19] “Their enemy had been slain, but since they had lost Indra, the gods, with Agni as their leader, worshiped Viṣṇu, the foremost in the three worlds, again and again saying: ‘You are the highest refuge, O God. You are Lord and the firstborn of the world. It is for the sake of the protection of all beings that you took the form of Viṣṇu. You have slain Vṛtra, but the sin of *brahmahatyā* is afflicting Vāsava. Please, tiger among the gods, declare the means for his liberation.’

[20–22] “When Viṣṇu had heard these words of the gods, he said: ‘Let Śakra sacrifice to me alone. Then I shall purify that wielder of the *vajra*. Once Indra, the chastiser of Pāka, has sacrificed to me with the sacred *aśvamedha*, he shall be free from fear, and he will once more attain the lordship of the gods.’ When he had instructed the gods in this fashion with this speech, which was like the nectar of immortality, Viṣṇu, the lord of the gods, being lauded, returned to heaven.”

Sarga *77*

[1–3] When Lakṣmaṇa had thus described the entire slaying of Vṛtra, omitting nothing, that foremost of men began to tell the rest of the story, saying: “Then, once the immensely powerful Vṛtra, the terror of the gods, had been slain, Śakra, the slayer of Vṛtra, overwhelmed with the sin of *brahmahatyā*, was unable to regain consciousness. Having resorted to the ends of the earth, he lay there, unconscious and insensate, writhing like a serpent.

[4–5] “Now after thousand-eyed Indra had vanished, the world was in a terrible state. The earth looked devastated, parched, its forests desiccated.

Ponds, lakes, and rivers were empty of water, and there was distress on the part of creatures caused by the drought.

[6–7] “But as this world was wasting away, the gods, their minds agitated, performed the sacrifice previously prescribed by Viṣṇu. Then all the hosts of the gods, together with their preceptors and the seers, proceeded together to the place where Indra lay, dazed with fear.

[8–9] “When they saw thousand-eyed Indra, dazed by the sin of *brahmahatyā*, they placed that lord of the gods at their head and performed the *aśvamedha*. Then, O lord of men, a very grand *aśvamedha* proceeded for the sake of the purification of great Mahendra from the sin of *brahmahatyā*.

[10–11] “But then, at the conclusion of the sacrifice, Brahmahatyā herself approached those great ones and said these words: ‘Where, then, will you establish a residence for me?’ Gratified and filled with delight, the gods then said to her, ‘You must divide yourself by yourself into four parts, O unassailable lady.’

[12–15] “When Brahmahatyā, with whom it was impossible to abide, had heard the speech of the great gods, there, in their presence, she requested a residence somewhere else: ‘With one portion, I will dwell in rivers when they are filled with water, and with the second, in trees. This is the truth I am telling you. And as for my third portion, with that I will dwell for three nights in women endowed with youth and filled with pride, as a crusher of their pride. And, O you bulls among the gods, with my fourth portion, I will possess those who intentionally kill innocent brahmans.’

[16] “Then the gods replied to her, ‘Everything shall be just as you say, O you with whom it is impossible to abide. May you prosper according to your desire.’

[17–19] “Then, filled with joy, the gods paid homage to thousand-eyed Indra. And thus did Vāsava become free from anxiety and purified of sin. Once thousand-eyed Indra had regained his position, the world became tranquil. And then Śakra worshiped that sacrifice of marvelous appearance. For such is the power of the *aśvamedha*, O delight of the Raghus. Therefore, immensely fortunate king, you should offer sacrifice with the *aśvamedha*.”

Sarga 78

[1–2] When Rāghava of immense blazing energy had heard the speech that Lakṣmaṇa had spoken, he, who was himself skilled in speech, smiled and responded with these words: “It is entirely and exactly as you say, Lakṣmaṇa, with respect to the killing of Vṛtra and the benefits of the *aśvamedha*.

[3–7] “For I have heard, gentle brother, that, long ago, the extremely righteous and majestic Ila, the son of Kardama Prajāpati, was the lord of the country of Bāhli. That greatly illustrious king brought the entire earth under his control. And, tiger among men, he ruled his kingdom as if it were his son. Afflicted with fear of him, gentle delight of the Raghus, the supremely noble gods, the sons of Diti, the great *asuras*, the great serpents, the *rākṣasas*, the *gandharvas*, and the extremely great *yakṣas* paid him homage. Indeed, the three worlds themselves feared that great king when he was angry. For such was the king of the Bāhlīkas. He was unwavering in righteousness and in might. He was highly illustrious and supremely exalted in intellect.

[8–10] “Once, in the charming month of Caitra, that great-armed king, together with his retainers, troops, and mounts, conducted a hunt in a beautiful forest. In that forest the king slaughtered animals in their hundreds and thousands, but even after killing them, the great king was not satisfied. Slaughtering ten thousand animals of various kinds, the great king wandered into the region where Mahāsena was born.

[11–13] “But there the unassailable lord of the god among gods, Hara, accompanied by all his attendants, was making love to the daughter of the king of the mountains. There, near a mountain waterfall, Umā’s lord, whose banner bears the lord of cattle, had turned himself into a woman in his desire to delight the goddess. And whichever creatures in that region of the forest bore a masculine gender, along with everything else that was there, came to have a feminine gender.

[14–16] “At that very juncture, King Ila, the son of Kardama, wandered into that region, slaughtering thousands of animals. And there, delight of the Raghus, he saw that everything, including the serpents, beasts, and birds, had been turned into females and that he himself, as well as his attendants, had become women. When he saw himself in such a condition, he became immensely distressed. But when he realized that this was the work of Umā’s lord, he was terrified.

[17–19] “Then the king, together with his servants, troops, and mounts, took refuge with the great god, black-throated Śiva of the matted locks. That beneficent and illustrious Lord, together with the goddess, laughed, and, as he was a granter of boons, he said these words to the son of Prajāpati: ‘Get up! Get up, immensely powerful royal seer Kārdameya! Gentle prince of excellent vows, choose any boon other than manhood.’

[20–22] “Thus was the grief-stricken king denied by the great god; but since he had become a woman, he would accept no other boon from that foremost of gods. Then, stricken with still greater grief, the king wholeheartedly prostrated himself before the great goddess, daughter of the king of the mountains, and said: ‘Goddess of boons! Granter of boons! [aa]You are the most beautiful woman in all the worlds. O gentle goddess, the vision of whom is never in vain, I appeal to you. Homage to you.’

[23–24] “Understanding what was in the heart of the royal seer, the goddess, with the approval of Rudra, replied with these auspicious words in the presence of Hara: ‘The god will be the granter of half of the boon, and similarly I will be of the other half. Therefore, you may choose half of womanhood and half of manhood for as long as you wish.’

[25–26] “When the king had heard the goddess’s unsurpassed and most marvelous boon, he was delighted at heart and then said these words: ‘If, O Goddess, you who are unequaled in the world for beauty, are pleased with me, then may I once again be a man for a month, after first having become a woman for a month.’

[27–29] “When the goddess of the lovely face realized what he desired, she replied with these auspicious words: ‘It shall be so. Your majesty, when you are a man, you will not remember your having been a woman, and when, in the following month, you become a woman, you will not remember your ever having been a man.’ And in this way, the king Ila Kārdami, having been a man for a month, would then, for a month, become a woman named Ilā, the most beautiful woman in the triple world.”

Sarga 79

[1–3] When Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata had heard the story of Ila as it had been narrated by Rāma, they were extremely amazed. Cupping their hands in reverence toward Rāma, they then asked once more for a detailed account of the particular situation of that great king. “How did that king endure his

misfortune while he was a woman? On the other hand, what sort of life did he lead when he was a man?”

[4–7] When Kākutstha had heard their words, so filled with curiosity, he related how it had fared with that king. “Having become the most beautiful woman in the world, she passed that very first month surrounded by those women who had previously been his attendants. Soon she, the most beautiful woman in the world, her eyes like lotus petals, wandered on foot deep into that forest, which was filled with trees, shrubs, and creepers. Then, having left all the mounts behind, Ilā enjoyed herself throughout a broad mountain meadow.

[8–10] “Now in that forested region, not far from the mountain, there was an extraordinarily beautiful lake frequented by flocks of various birds. In the middle of it, Ilā then spied Soma’s son, Budha, who was blazing with the effulgence of his body, like the full moon newly risen. Engaged in severe and difficult austerities there in the water, he was glorious, unfettered, and in the full flush of youth.

[11–12] “Together with her companions, who had previously been men but had now become women, O delight of the Raghus, she, in her astonishment, ruffled the entire lake. But as for Budha, no sooner had he caught sight of her than he was afflicted by the arrows of Kāma. Unable to control himself, he began to tremble in the water.

[13–15] “Gazing at Ilā, whose beauty exceeded any in the triple world, he fell to thinking: ‘Who can she, who surpasses even a goddess, be? Never have I seen anyone endowed with such beauty even among the goddesses, the *apsarases*, or the women of the great serpents and the *asuras*. If she is not the wife of another, she would be a fitting one for me.’ With this thought in mind, he came out of the water to the shore.

[16–17] “Once he had caught his breath, that righteous sage then called out to four of the young women, and they, in turn, greeted him respectfully. The righteous sage asked them, ‘To whom does this woman, the most beautiful in the world, belong? And why has she come here? Tell me the truth at once.’

[18–21] “And when those women had heard his speech, so pleasant and sweet, with its sweet syllables, they all replied with sweet voices: ‘This fair-hipped woman continues to be our leader. Lacking a husband, she wanders with us through the depths of the forest.’ When he had heard the women’s

speech with its obscure wording, the twice-born Budha recited the sacred *āvartinī* spell. When he had thus come to know the entire matter concerning that king, just as it had come about, that bull among sages said to all of those women:

[22–23] " 'Here the fortunate *kiṃpuruṣas* dwell on the slopes of the mountain. You too shall dwell on this mountain, and so you must arrange your living quarters. All of you women will forever live on roots, leaves, and fruits, and you shall surely obtain *kiṃpuruṣas* as your husbands.'

[24] "No sooner had that large group of women heard that speech of the son of Soma than they were turned into *kiṃpuruṣa* women. They then inhabited that mountain in many different places."

Sarga 80

[1–2] And then, when Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata had heard about how those women had become *kiṃpuruṣas*, they both said, "How wonderful!" to Rāma, the lord of the people. Righteous and illustrious Rāma then resumed the tale of Prajāpati's son Ila, saying:

[3–6] "When Budha, the foremost of seers, had seen that all of those *kinnara* women had dispersed, he smiled gently and addressed that beautiful woman: 'O fair-faced woman, I am the dearly beloved son of Soma. Please love me with devotion, fair-hipped one, and with tender regard.' When Ilā, who was cut off from her own retinue in that deserted place, had heard those words of his, she replied to that great planetary divinity of lovely radiance: 'I do as I please, gentle sir, and I am at your disposal. Command me, son of Soma, and do as you desire.'

[7–8] "When the son of the moon god had heard that wonderful response of hers, he was overcome with excitement, and, filled with desire, he made love with her. And for Budha, who, filled with desire, was passionately making love to fair-faced Ilā, the month of Mādhava passed as if it were a mere instant.

[9–11] "Then, after a full month, Ila, Prajāpati's majestic son, whose face was like the full moon, awoke in their bed. And there King Ila spied Soma's son, engaged in austerities in the lake, standing without any support, his arms raised, and he said: 'Blessed one, I came to this inaccessible mountain, along with my retinue, but I do not see that army. Where in the world have those followers of mine gone?'

[12–14] “When he had heard that speech of the royal seer, who had lost his memory, Budha responded with beguiling words, soothing him with his resonant voice: ‘Your retainers were annihilated by a massive hailstorm, while you, afflicted with fear of the wind and rain, slept in the ashram. Take heart, bless you. For you may dwell here as you please, hero, free from fear and anxiety, living on fruits and roots.’

[15–18] “Comforted by that speech but saddened at the death of his retainers, the immensely illustrious king replied with these splendid words: ‘I shall renounce my kingdom, for, deprived of my retainers, I cannot continue even for a moment. You must please grant me permission, brahman. My eldest son, who is known as Śaśabindu, is immensely illustrious, O brahman. Devoted to righteousness, he will take over my kingdom. For I cannot bear to go there and speak those dreadful words to the happy wives of my retainers, O sage of immense blazing energy.’

[19–21] “As the lord among kings was speaking in this fashion, Budha comfortingly uttered these extraordinary and wonderful words: ‘Please choose to remain here. You must not grieve, immensely powerful Kārdameya. When you have dwelt here for a year, I will bring about something of benefit to you.’ When Ila had heard those words of Budha, who was tireless in action, he made up his mind to stay just as that exponent of the doctrine of Brahman had urged.

[22–25] “Thus, he, having become a lovely woman for one month, made love constantly, while as a man in alternate months, he set his mind on righteousness. Then, in the ninth month, she, fair-hipped Ilā, gave birth by the son of Soma to a son, Purūravas, the child of her own body. As soon as her immensely powerful son, who looked just like Budha, was born, the fair-hipped Ilā placed him in his father’s hands. And as for the self-controlled Budha, after comforting the lord of men who had now become male, he entertained him with tales exemplary of righteousness.”

Sarga 81

[1–2] When Rāma had spoken in this fashion about the miraculous birth of Purūravas, Lakṣmaṇa and the extremely illustrious Bharata spoke once again: “When she, the beloved of Soma’s son, had dwelt with him for a year, what did she do then? Please tell us just as it happened, foremost of men.”

[3–7] When Rāma had heard the sweetness of the words of those two who were inquiring of him, he continued the story of Prajāpati's son. "Then, after heroic Ila had once again become a man, supremely wise and immensely illustrious Budha summoned the extremely noble Saṃvarta, Bhṛgu's son Cyavana, the sage Ariṣṭanemin, the delightful Pramodana, and the sage Durvāsas. When he had brought them all together, the eloquent sage, well composed through his self-control, addressed his guests, all of whom perceived the highest truth: 'This is the great-armed King Ila, son of Kardama. You all know what happened to him. Now you must do what would be best for him.'

[8–10] "While they were conversing, Kardama of immense blazing energy arrived at the ashram together with some eminent twice-born brahmans. Pulastya, Kratu, Vaṣaṭkāra, and Oṃkāra of great blazing energy came to the ashram. All of them were delighted at heart at meeting one another, and desiring only the best for the lord of Bāhli, they then individually offered him advice.

[11–13] "Now, for the sake of his son, Kardama spoke words that were extremely beneficial: 'Twice-born brahmans, hear my words as to what would be best for the king. I can see no remedy other than bull-bannered Śiva. And, indeed, no sacrifice other than the *aśvamedha* is as dear to that great god. Therefore, let us all sacrifice to the unassailable god on the king's behalf.' Addressed in this fashion by Kardama, all those bulls among twice-born brahmans agreed to that sacrifice in order to propitiate Rudra.

[14–17] "The royal seer named Marutta, the conqueror of enemy citadels and a disciple of Saṃvarta, performed the sacrifice. The great sacrifice took place near Budha's ashram, and the greatly illustrious Rudra was supremely gratified. Then, upon the completion of the sacrifice, Umā's lord was pleased and, with the greatest delight, said the following with regard to Ilā to all those twice-born brahmans: 'I am pleased with the *aśvamedha* and with your devotion, O foremost of twice-born brahmans. What excellent favor may I do for this lord of Bāhli?'

[18–19] "As the lord of the gods was speaking in this fashion, those twice-born brahmans, well composed, further propitiated him so that Ilā might become a man. Then, delighted at heart, Rudra restored his manhood. And having granted that to Ilā, the immensely illustrious god vanished.

[20–24] “Once the *aśvamedha* had been completed and Hara had vanished, all those farsighted, twice-born brahmans departed just as they had come. And as for King Ila, having left Bāhli, he founded the glorious and unsurpassed city of Pratiṣṭhāna in the middle country. But as for Śaśabindu, that conqueror of enemy citadels, he became king in Bāhli, while Prajāpati’s mighty son Ila was king in Pratiṣṭhāna. In time, Ila attained the unsurpassed Brahmaloka, and King Purūravas Aila inherited Pratiṣṭhāna. For such is the power of the *aśvamedha*, O bulls among men, that Ila, having been a woman, regained his manhood and other things that were difficult to obtain as well.”

Sarga 82

[1–3] When immeasurably radiant Kākutstha had related this to his two brothers, he once more addressed to Lakṣmaṇa these words in keeping with righteousness: “Lakṣmaṇa, once I have summoned Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Jābāli, Kaśyapa, and all the other preeminent twice-born brahmans who are experts in the *aśvamedha*, and once I have taken counsel with them, I shall, with great concentration, release a horse endowed with all the auspicious signs.”

[4–6] When he had heard those words spoken by Rāghava, Lakṣmaṇa, acting quickly, summoned all those twice-born brahmans and presented them to Rāghava. When they had seen the highly unassailable Rāghava, who resembled a god and who was respectfully bowing at their feet, they honored him with blessings. Cupping his hands in reverence, Rāghava then addressed those foremost among the twice-born brahmans in words concerning the *aśvamedha* that were in keeping with righteousness.

[7–13] When Rāma had heard the wonderful words concerning the *aśvamedha* on the part of the foremost among the twice-born brahmans, he was extremely pleased. Having secured their approval, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa: “Great-armed prince, send for the great Sugrīva, saying to him, ‘Bless you, please come quickly, together with the great tawny monkeys and many of their dependents, in order to participate in this greatest of sacrifices.’ And let great-armed Vibhīṣaṇa, traveling swiftly, attend the *aśvamedha* accompanied by many *rākṣasas*, who can travel anywhere at will. And, tiger among men, let those kings who are eager to please me come quickly with their retinues to the unsurpassed sacrificial ground.

Moreover, Lakṣmaṇa, you must invite to the *aśvamedha* all those twice-born brahmans, wholly devoted to righteousness, who dwell in distant lands. And, great-armed prince, let the seers, those treasure-stores of asceticism, be summoned as well as the great seers—together with their wives—who dwell in distant lands.

[14–16] "Great-armed prince, please give instructions for a vast sacrificial enclosure on the banks of the Gomatī, in the Naimiṣa forest, for it is unsurpassed in holiness. And, immensely powerful prince, let a hundred thousand cartloads of the finest rice and ten thousand cartloads of sesame seeds and *mudga* beans go on ahead. Let the immensely wise Bharata go on ahead accompanying many tens of millions in gold coins and more than a billion in silver.

[17–19] "Indeed, let the immensely wise Bharata go on ahead, placing before him rows of shops along the way, all the actors and dancers, the townsfolk young and old, twice-born brahmans in deep concentration, skilled workmen, highly expert craftsmen, all my mothers, the princes' womenfolk, and a golden image of my wife, one fit for consecration at the sacrificial rite."

Sarga 83

[1–3] When Bharata's elder brother had swiftly sent ahead all the sacrificial requisites, omitting nothing, he released a piebald stallion marked with the auspicious signs. And then, once he had placed Lakṣmaṇa, together with the sacrificial priests, in charge of the horse, Kākutstha proceeded with his army to the Naimiṣa forest. And when great-armed Rāma saw the superlative and marvelous sacrificial enclosure, he experienced unequaled delight, and he cried, "How magnificent!"

[4–8] While Rāma was dwelling in the Naimiṣa forest, all the lords of men came from every kingdom and Rāma honored them. The immensely illustrious foremost of men ordered costly royal pavilions for those great kings together with their retinues. And Bharata, together with Śatrughna, then quickly gave food, drink, and garments to those great kings and their retinues. And all the great monkeys, along with Sugrīva, humbly waited upon the brahmans. Vibhīṣaṇa too, surrounded by many garlanded *rākṣasas*, waited upon the seers of fierce austerities as their servant.

[9–11] And thus, in strict accordance with the injunctions, that sacrifice, the *aśvamedha*, commenced. Meanwhile, the horse proceeded to wander under the protection of Lakṣmaṇa. While the great king's *aśvamedha* was going on, there was no cry other than: "Give confidently and freely until all who ask are satisfied." And it was seen that the monkeys and the *rākṣasas* gave accordingly. And there at the king's preeminent sacrifice, which was thronged with happy and well-nourished people, there was no one who was unwashed, unhappy, or underfed.

[12–16] Even the great seers there who had lived a long time could not recall such a sacrifice that had been adorned with such an abundance of gifts. Although silver, gold, jewels, and garments were continually being given away, there appeared to be no end of them. "Such a sacrifice has never been seen before, even on the part of Śakra, Soma, Yama, or Varuṇa," so said those treasure-houses of austerity. The monkeys were stationed everywhere, as were the *rākṣasas*, and, their hands full, they gave clothing and wealth generously to those who desired them. Such was the sacrifice, replete with every virtue, of that lion among kings. It continued for more than a year and was in no way deficient.

Sarga 84

[1–4] While that preeminent and marvelous sacrifice was proceeding, as has been described, the bull among sages, Vālmīki, quickly arrived, along with his disciples. When he had viewed that heavenly sacrifice, so marvelous to behold, he had some charming leaf huts constructed a little apart from the encampments of the seers. Delighted, he then said to his two disciples: "Go and, with great concentration and with the greatest joy, sing the poem, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in its entirety in the holy encampments of the seers, in the dwellings of the brahmans, on the royal highways and byways, and at the dwellings of the kings.

[5–7] "But you must especially sing it right before the sacrificial priests near the entrance to Rāma's dwelling, where the sacrifice is going on. You must keep on singing, pausing only from time to time to eat the various sweet fruits that grow on the hilltops here. For indeed, in eating these fruits and these especially delicious roots, dear boys, you will experience no fatigue and can stay clear of the city.

[8–10] “And if Rāma, the lord of the earth, should summon you to perform in the presence of the assembled seers, then let the singing commence. With the greatest delight, you must sing twenty *sargas* each day according to the several tempos, just as I taught you earlier. And you must not harbor even the slightest greediness in expectation of wealth. For of what use is wealth to ashram dwellers, who partake of only fruits and roots?

[11–14] “But if Kākutstha should ask you, ‘Whose sons are you?’ you must speak thus to that lord of men, saying, ‘We are disciples of Vālmīki.’ While playing on these very melodious strings and their frets, as I showed you earlier, you should sing most sweetly and confidently. You must sing it from the beginning, showing no disrespect for the king. For the king is by rights the father of all beings. Therefore, tomorrow morning, you two, delighted at heart and with great concentration, should sweetly sing this song to the accompaniment of both stringed and percussion instruments.”

[15–16] Then, when the supremely noble and highly illustrious seer Vālmīki Prācetasa had repeatedly instructed them in this fashion, he fell silent. The two princes, having been properly prepared through the guidance of the Bhārgava, just as were the Aśvins, took to heart those splendid words spoken by the seer, and, filled with anticipation, they passed the night comfortably.

Sarga 85

[1–3] When the night had given way to dawn, the two princes bathed, made their oblations into the fire, eater of oblations, and then sang in place after place, just as they had been instructed to do earlier by the seer. Kākutstha heard about that narrative of his past adventures in various lands and about the unprecedented mode of recitation, which was ornamented by singing, replete with the various tempos, and accompanied by stringed and percussion instruments. And when he heard about it being performed by two boys, Rāghava was overcome with curiosity.

[4–8] Then, during an interval of the rite, that tiger among men, the king, assembled the great seers, kings, scholars, townsfolk, experts in ancient lore, grammarians, and the aged, twice-born brahmans, and when he had assembled them all, he had the two singers brought in. The delighted hosts of seers there and the immensely powerful kings, drinking in, as it were, the king and those two singers with their eyes, then all said to one another

simultaneously: “Both of them look like Rāma, just like reflections of the same image. Were they not wearing matted locks and barkcloth garments, we would not be able to discern any difference between Rāghava and the two who are singing.”

[9–11] And as those assembled were conversing in this fashion, the two young sages began a song that enhanced the delight of those who heard it. Then that sweet and ethereal musical performance took place there, and because of the perfection of the singing, none of those who heard it could get enough of it. First, it commenced from the beginning, that is, from the *sarga* in which there was the meeting with Nārada. Continuing from there, they sang twenty *sargas*.

[12–15] Then, in the late afternoon, after having heard those twenty *sargas*, Rāghava, who was so fond of his brothers, said to Bharata: “Kākutstha, you must at once give these two great singers eighteen thousand gold coins. The exertions of these two youths must not be in vain.” But the two great bards were perplexed and would not accept the gold that was being offered, saying: “Of what use is this to us? We are two forest dwellers who are quite satisfied with woodland fruits and roots. What would we do in the forest with this brightly shining gold?”

[16–18] As the two of them were speaking in this fashion, Rāma and all those who were listening were greatly amazed and were filled with curiosity. Eager to hear about the origin of that poem, Rāma, of immense blazing energy, asked the two young sages: “What is the extent of this poem? And what did the great man base it on? Indeed, which bull among sages is the creator of this great poem?”

[19–21] The two young sages then spoke these words to Rāghava, who was questioning them: “The author, the holy Vālmīki, by whom this, your life history, has been revealed in its entirety, is present at the sacrifice. Starting from the beginning, lord of kings, there are five hundred *sargas*, and it is based upon your entire life, your majesty, including the good and the bad. If you decide to hear it, your majesty, then, great chariot-warrior, please listen to it, together with your younger brothers, when you are at leisure during an interval of the rite.”

[22–23] Rāma replied, “By all means!” And so, delighted, the two of them, having taken leave of Rāghava, went back to their dwelling, where the bull among sages waited. But as for Rāma, having heard the sweetness

of that singing, he returned to the sacrificial enclosure, along with the sages and the great kings.

Sarga 86

[1–3] Together with the sages, kings, and monkeys, Rāma listened to the supremely wonderful singing for many days. During the singing, Rāma, having recognized the two bards as Sītā's sons, said these words in the midst of the assembly: "Go hence into the presence of the holy one and say in my words:

[4–6] " 'If Sītā be of untainted conduct or if she has expiated her sin, then let her, with the permission of the great sage, demonstrate her purity here. Then, after having determined the will of the sage and the intentions of Sītā, who may be eager to give some proof of her innocence, report to me at once. Tomorrow morning, for the sake of clearing my name as well, let Janaka's daughter Maithilī take a solemn oath here in the midst of the assembly.' "

[7–10] When the messengers had heard these supreme and wonderful words of Rāghava, they proceeded together to the sacrificial enclosure where the bull among sages was staying. Prostrating themselves before the great and radiant sage of immeasurable splendor, they repeated Rāma's gentle and sweet words. When he had heard their speech and had understood Rāma's intention, that sage of enormous blazing energy then spoke these words: "So be it! Bless you all. Since a husband is a wife's divinity, Sītā will act in such a way that Rāghava is satisfied."

[11–13] Addressed in this fashion by the sage, all those immensely powerful messengers of Rāma returned to Rāghava, and they all repeated the sage's words. And so, when the delighted Kākutstha had heard the words of the great sage, he addressed the seers and kings assembled there, saying, "These holy ones together with their disciples, these lords of men, along with their retinues, and anyone else who so desires—let them witness Sītā's oath."

[14–16] When they had heard those words of great Rāghava, there arose on the part of all those foremost seers a great cry of "Excellent!" And the great kings too praised Rāghava, saying, "Only you, best of men, and no one else on earth would do such a thing." When Rāghava had thus made his

decision, he said, “It shall take place tomorrow.” Then that destroyer of his foes dismissed them all.

Sarga 87

[1–7] When the night had given way to dawn, King Rāghava of immense blazing energy went to the sacrificial enclosure and summoned all the seers. Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Jābāli, Kāśyapa, Viśvāmitra of prolonged austerities, Durvāsas of great austerities, Agastya, Śakti, Bhārgava, Vāmana, long-lived Mārkaṇḍeya, Maudgalya of great austerities, the Bhārgava Cyavana, Śatānanda the knower of righteousness, Bharadvāja of blazing energy, and Agni’s son Suprabha—these and many other sages of fierce vows, as well as all those kings, tigers among men, assembled. And all of those great ones—the very mighty *rākṣasas* and the immensely powerful monkeys—assembled out of eager anticipation. And kshatriyas, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras* by the thousands all assembled to witness Sītā’s oath.

[8–12] Once Vālmīki, the foremost of sages, had heard that they had all assembled in this fashion and were as motionless as if they had been turned to stone, he quickly entered together with Sītā. Thinking only of Rāma, Sītā, choked with tears, followed behind the seer, her face downcast and her hands cupped in reverence. When those assembled saw Sītā coming behind Vālmīki like Śrī following Brahmā, there arose a great cry of “Excellent!” And thus, a great cheer burst forth from all of those who had been overwhelmed with a vast grief born of sorrow. Some cried, “Excellent, Sītā!” others, “Excellent, Rāma!” and still others there cried, “Excellent! Excellent!” to both of them.

[13–20] Then, together with Sītā, Vālmīki, that bull among sages, strode into the midst of the mass of people and spoke in this fashion to Rāghava: “Here, Dāśarathi, is Sītā, of strict vows, who practices righteousness. Even though she had done no wrong, she was abandoned by you near my ashram. Sītā will give proof of her innocence to you of solemn vows, Rāma, you who are fearful of the malicious rumors among the people. You must permit her to do so. And here are Jānakī’s two sons, born as twins. These two unassailable boys are your sons as well. This that I am telling you is the truth. I am the tenth son of Pracetas, O delight of the Rāghavas. I do not recall ever uttering an untrue statement. Thus, these two are your sons. I have performed austerities for many thousands of years. Just as Maithilī is

innocent, so may I enjoy their fruits. When, Rāghava, at the rapids in the wilderness, I had scrutinized Sītā with regard to her five senses and her mind as the sixth, I realized, ‘She is blameless,’ and so I took her in. She, who holds her husband as her divinity and who is of blameless conduct and innocent, will give proof of her innocence to you, who are fearful of the malicious rumors among the people.”

Sarga 88

[1–4] When Rāghava was addressed in this fashion by Vālmīki and had caught sight of Sītā, who resembled a goddess, he cupped his hands in reverence; and there, in the midst of the assembled people, he replied: “Let it be exactly as you say, illustrious knower of righteousness. But your blameless words, brahman, are proof enough for me. Moreover, Vaidehī had already given proof of her innocence long ago in the presence of the gods. But although I knew Sītā to be innocent, brahman, I nonetheless abandoned her out of fear of the people. Therefore, please, sir, forgive me. And I acknowledge that these two bards, born as twins, are my sons. So let me show my affection toward Maithilī once she has proven that she is blameless in the midst of the people assembled here.”

[5–8] When the foremost among the gods realized what Rāma intended, they all assembled, placing Grandfather Brahmā at their head. There were the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Viśvedevas, the hosts of the Maruts, the Aśvins, the seers, the *gandharvas*, the troupes of the *apsarases*, and the *sādhyas*. Indeed, all the gods and all the foremost seers were there. At that moment, Vāyu, god of wind, foremost of gods, auspicious, pleasant, delightful, and bearing a heavenly fragrance, refreshed the entire mass of people. All the people assembled there from every country witnessed that inconceivable and almost miraculous thing that had taken place, just as if it were long ago in the Kṛta Yuga.

[9–10] When Sītā, who was clad in ochre garments, saw all those who were assembled, she cupped her hands in reverence, cast down her eyes, and lowered her face. Then she spoke these words: “As I have never even thought of any man other than Rāghava, so may Mādhavī, the goddess of the earth, open wide for me.”

[11–13] And as Vaidehī was thus taking this oath, a miraculous thing occurred. From the surface of the earth there arose an unsurpassed,

heavenly throne. It was borne on the heads of great serpents of immeasurable might. It was adorned with every jewel, and it was celestial with its celestial beauty. Then Dharaṇī, the goddess of the earth, who was on that throne, took Maithilī in her arms and, greeting her with words of welcome, seated her upon it.

[14–16] At the sight of Sītā entering Rasātala while seated on that throne, a continuous celestial shower of blossoms rained down upon her. Suddenly there arose a great cry of "Excellent!" among the gods: "Excellent! Excellent! O Sītā, you who demonstrate such virtuous conduct!" Such were the many different cries that the gods uttered as they, hovering in the sky, witnessed, with delighted hearts, Sītā's entrance into the earth.

[17–20] All those who were present in the sacrificial enclosure—the sages as well as those tigers among men, the kings—could not get over their amazement. Among all beings, fixed and moving, in the sky and on the earth—including the enormous *dānavas* and the lords of the great serpents in Pātāla—some, delighted, cried out, while some were lost in thought. Some just gazed at Rāma, while others, stupefied, gazed at Sītā. They all assembled to witness Sītā's entrance into the earth. And for that moment the entire world was completely transfixed.

[bb]*Sarga 88* (Appendix I, Number 13, Lines 1–51)*

[1–3 = ll. 1–6] When Vaidehī had entered the underworld known as Rasātala, all the people and the sages there cried out, "Excellent! Excellent!" in Rāma's presence. Leaning on his wooden staff, his eyes clouded with tears, hanging his head, his mind distressed, Rāma was profoundly heartbroken. After weeping for a long time, Rāma, shedding copious tears, was overcome by rage and grief, and he said these words:

[4–10 = ll. 7–20] "Grief such as I have never before felt seems to want to grip my heart right here. Sītā just now vanished right before my eyes, just as did Lakṣmī from Indra. Earlier she was carried away and concealed on the Laṅkan shore of the great ocean. And yet, I brought her back even from there, how much more easily might I do so from the depths of the earth. O Vasudhā, goddess of earth! My lady, you must give Sītā back to me or else I shall display my wrath so that you will know who I truly am. Granted, you are my mother-in-law, for Maithilī came forth from you, and she was

adopted long ago by Janaka, who, plough in hand, was ploughing. Therefore, you must either give Sītā back or open wide for me. For I must be with her, whether it be in the underworld known as Pātāla or in the highest heaven. Therefore, you must bring Sītā back for I have been driven mad on account of Maithilī. This very day, if you do not give me back Sītā, who has entered the earth, just as she was, I shall destroy you entirely, along with your mountains and forests. I will either destroy the earth or let everything in this world be once more nothing but water!"

[11–21 = ll. 21–40] As Kākutstha, the delight of the Raghus, filled with rage and grief, was speaking in this fashion, Brahmā, together with the hosts of gods, said to him: "Rāma! Rāma! You of excellent vows! You must not torment yourself. Remember your immemorial nature and our counsel, tormentor of your foes. At this time, you must recall that you are an unassailable incarnation of Viṣṇu. You must heed what I say in the midst of this assembly. This very poem that you have heard is the foremost of poems. No doubt, it will explain everything in great detail, Rāma. Vālmīki has rendered everything, hero, starting from the time of your birth, including your experiences of joy and sorrow, and even what is yet to come. This, the first poem, is entirely devoted to you, Rāma Rāghava; for no one other than you deserves to enjoy such poetic fame. Moreover, I heard it in its entirety a long time ago together with the gods. It is divine and of marvelous form. It is utterly truthful, and it obscures nothing. Now, Kākutstha, tiger among men, your mind focused in keeping with righteousness, you must listen to the poem, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, including the remaining events that are yet to come. So, most illustrious prince of immense blazing energy, together with the seers here, listen to the great remainder of this poem known as the *Uttara*. By no means, Kākutstha, is this culminating section to be heard by anyone other than the great seers and you, hero, who are the supreme seer."

[22–23 = ll. 41–45] When the god Brahmā, lord of the three worlds, had said this much, he went off to the highest heaven together with Vāsava and the gods. But then those immensely powerful great seers, the inhabitants of Brahmā's world who had been there, with Brahmā's permission, returned, since their hearts were set upon it, to hear the *Uttara*, which concerned the future of Rāghava.

[24–26 = ll. 46–51] Then, having heard the auspicious words of the God of gods, Rāma, of supreme blazing energy, said this to Vālmīki: “Holy one, the sages, inhabitants of Brahmā’s world, have set their hearts on hearing the *Uttara*, which concerns my future. Please let it commence tomorrow.” Once he had resolved thus and had accepted those two bards, Rāma quickly dismissed the assembly and retired to the sacrificial hall.

Sarga 89

[ccAppendix I, no. 13, ll. 52–56; 7.89.1] When the night had brightened into dawn, Rāma assembled the great sages. Then he said to his two sons, “Now sing, setting all cares aside.” Then, once the venerable great seers were seated, the two bards sang that poem, the *Uttara*, which related future events. But because then, at the conclusion of the sacrifice, Vaidehī had entered the earth by virtue of her perfect fidelity, Rāma was deeply disconsolate. No longer able to see Vaidehī, he regarded this world as empty. He was completely overwhelmed by grief and could get no peace of mind.

[2–4] After dismissing all the kings, as well as the apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*, he had the hosts of eminent brahmans dismissed, laden with wealth. Then, after dismissing them all, lotus-eyed Rāma entered Ayodhyā, cherishing Sītā in his heart. The delight of the Raghus took no wife after Sītā, so that in sacrifice after sacrifice, a golden Jānakī served in the role of his wife.

[5–7] For ten thousand years he performed the *aśvamedha* as well as ten times as many *vājapeyas*, in which there was a distribution of much gold. And majestic Rāma offered the *agniṣṭoma* and the *atirātra*, as well as the *gosava* rites, at which great wealth was distributed, and other rites as well, accompanied by ample sacrificial fees. And in this way a very long time passed while great Rāghava ruled the kingdom, exerting himself in righteousness.

[8–10] The apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas* remained under Rāma’s rule, and the kings were devoted to Rāghava, day in and day out. Parjanya brought the rains at the proper time, there was abundant food, and the directions were pellucid. The city and the countryside were filled with happy and well-nourished people. While Rāma was ruling the kingdom, no

one suffered an untimely death, nor at that time did illness afflict any living creature, nor was there any breach of righteousness.

[11–15] Then, after a long time, Rāma's illustrious mother, surrounded by her sons and grandsons, succumbed to the law of time. Sumitrā followed her, as did illustrious Kaikeyī, who, after performing many different acts of righteousness, was established in the highest heaven. All of them were established in heaven, and, once reunited with King Daśaratha, those fortunate women resumed their wifely duties. Time after time Rāma gave generous donations to brahman ascetics on behalf of his mothers, without distinction. Righteous Rāma made offerings of many precious things to his ancestors and performed supremely excellent sacrifices, thus gratifying his ancestors and the gods.

Sarga 90

[1–3] Now after some time, King Yudhājit Kekaya dispatched his *guru*, the immeasurably splendid brahman-seer Gārgya, the son of Añgiras, to great Rāghava. And out of affection the king gave Rāma an unsurpassed gift of ten thousand horses, woolen blankets, jewels, and splendid garments of varied hue, as well as many ornaments.

[4–7] When Rāghava Kākutstha heard that the great seer Gārgya was approaching and that he had come as the beloved emissary of his uncle Aśvapati, he went forth to a distance of two miles, along with his retinue, and there he honored Gārgya and accepted that wealth. After he had inquired affectionately about the complete well-being of his maternal uncle, Rāma began to question that extremely illustrious seer, once the latter had been seated: "What words has my maternal uncle uttered on account of which the holy one, foremost among the eloquent, like a second Bṛhaspati, has come here?"

[8–13] When the brahman-seer heard what Rāma had said, he began to tell Rāghava in detail the extraordinary mission that was to be undertaken: "Your maternal uncle, Yudhājit, has uttered these affectionate words, great-armed bull among men. Now hear them, if you please: 'There is a country that lies along both banks of the Sindhu. It is the supremely beautiful kingdom of the *gandharvas*, and it is richly endowed with fruits and roots. The thirty million heroic and immensely powerful sons of Śailūṣa, heavily armed *gandharvas*, protect that country in battle. After conquering them,

great-armed Kākutstha, along with the splendid kingdom of the *gandharvas*, you must, with great concentration, establish two cities. No one else can accomplish this. That country is extremely beautiful. You will love it, great-armed hero. I would not lie to you.' "

[14–18] When Rāghava had heard this, he was delighted both with the great seer and with his maternal uncle. He spoke thus, "So be it!" and fixed his gaze upon Bharata. Delighted, Rāghava, his hands extended and cupped in reverence, said to the twice-born brahman: "These two princes will conquer that country, brahman-seer. These two, Takṣa and Puṣkala, are the valorous sons of Bharata. Well guarded by our maternal uncle and focused on righteousness, they will place Bharata at their head, and then, together with their troops and retinue, they will annihilate the sons of the *gandharva*. Then they will divide the two cities between them. Once he has founded those two splendid cities and established his two sons in them, the extremely righteous Bharata will once again return to me."

[19–20] When he had addressed the brahman-seer in this fashion, Rāma gave his orders to Bharata, together with his troops and retinue, and then consecrated the two princes. And so, under an auspicious constellation, Bharata placed the son of Aṅgiras before him and set forth together with his army and the two princes.

[21–25] As if commanded by Śakra, that army set forth from the city. It was unassailable even by the gods and *asuras*, and it was accompanied for a long way by Rāghava himself. Flesh-eating creatures and enormous *rākṣasas*, thirsting for blood, shadowed Bharata. And many hosts of malignant and extremely fearsome spirits, in their thousands, lusting to devour the flesh of the *gandharvas*' sons, went before the army, as did many thousands of lions, tigers, and jackals, while carrion birds circled in the sky. After camping on the way for a month and a half, the army, intact and filled with happy and well-nourished troops, reached Kekaya.

Sarga 91

[1–3] When Yudhājit, lord of the Kekayas, had heard that Bharata had come as the commander of an army, together with Gārgya, he experienced the greatest delight. Together with a huge host of men, the lord of the Kekayas marched forth. Hastening, he advanced against the godlike *gandharvas*.

Together, swift-striding Bharata and Yudhājit, along with their troops and their retinues, reached the city of the *gandharvas*.

[4–5] Upon hearing that Bharata had come, the immensely powerful *gandharvas* assembled from all directions, roaring and eager to fight. Then began a tumultuous, hair-raising, and immensely terrifying battle that went on for seven nights without either side gaining the victory.

[6–8] Then, in a rage Bharata, Rāma's younger brother, employed Kāla's supremely terrifying divine weapon-spell, known as the Saṃvarta, against the *gandharvas*. Caught by Kāla's noose and torn to pieces by the Saṃvarta, all thirty million of them were instantly annihilated on the spot by great Bharata. The gods, denizens of heaven, could not recall such a ghastly slaughter of such great warriors within the space of an instant.

[9–11] Once those heroes had been slain, Kaikayī's son, Bharata, founded two prosperous and splendid cities, establishing Takṣa in Takṣaśīlā and Puṣkara in Puṣkarāvatī. Within five years, the lovely country of the *gandharvas*, now the kingdom of Gāndhāra, was filled with provinces and their inhabitants. Both cities were filled with masses of wealth and jewels and were adorned with parklands. Their competition over the extent of their respective virtues made them rivals of each other.

[12–14] Both appeared extremely resplendent, and all transactions there were honest. They were filled with large numbers of parks and vehicles, and their central markets were well laid out. Both of those splendid cities were charming and adorned with great wealth, as well as with extremely beautiful mansions and identical seven-storied palaces. Both were adorned with many beautiful shrines to the divinities. Having established them over a period of five years, Rāghava's younger brother Bharata, that great-armed son of Kaikayī, returned to Ayodhyā.

[15–16] When majestic Bharata had respectfully saluted great Rāghava, who was like righteousness incarnate, just as Vāsava might Brahmā, he reported to him the great slaughter of the *gandharvas* and the settlement of that region, just as they had transpired. When Rāghava had heard all this, he was delighted with him.

Sarga 92

[1–4] When Rāghava had heard that, he, together with his brothers, experienced delight, and he said these extraordinary words to them:

“Saumitri, these two young sons of yours, Aṅgada and Candraketu, are well versed in righteousness. They are powerful bowmen and fit for kingship. I will consecrate these two as kings. Please find a country for them right away—one that is pleasant and spacious—where those two bowmen can enjoy themselves. But please, gentle brother, seek out a country in which there will be no oppression of kings and no destruction of ashrams, so that we may give no offense.”

[5–6] When Rāma had spoken in this fashion, Bharata replied: “There is the delightful and salubrious country of Kārāpatha. Let a city for great Aṅgada be established there as well as a lovely and salubrious one called Candrakānta for Candraketu.”

[7–9] Rāghava agreed to those words that Bharata had spoken, and then, having subjugated that country, he established a city for Aṅgada. And so for Aṅgada, Rāma, tireless in action, established and carefully guarded the delightful and charming city of Aṅgadīyā. And in the land of Malla, he established for the immensely powerful Candraketu the renowned and heavenly city of Candrakāntā, which was like the city of heaven.

[10–12] Then those heroes—Rāma, Bharata, and Lakṣmaṇa—unassailable in battle, attained the greatest delight and performed the consecration of the two princes. After they had consecrated the two princes, they sent them off accompanied by their armies and retinues—Aṅgada to the western country and Candraketu to the north. Lakṣmaṇa Saumitri accompanied Aṅgada, while Bharata served as the commander of Candraketu’s rear guard.

[13–17] Lakṣmaṇa remained in Aṅgadīyā for a year, and when his unassailable son was firmly established, he returned once again to Ayodhyā. As for Bharata, having similarly spent yet one more year, he returned once again to Ayodhyā, where he approached Rāma’s feet. Extremely righteous Saumitri and Bharata, devoted to Rāma’s feet, in their love for him, did not realize how much time had passed. And so, in this fashion, ten thousand years passed by, while they constantly exerted themselves in righteousness and in their duties to the populace. Having passed the time with contented hearts, they were enveloped in prosperity and fixed on the supreme path of righteousness. The three of them, resplendent with blazing energy, truly resembled the three sacred fires kindled and fed with oblations in a great sacrifice.

Sarga 93

[1–3] Now after some time, during which Rāma was steadfast in the path of righteousness, Kāla, in the form of an ascetic, arrived at the king's gateway. He spoke these words to the steadfast and illustrious Lakṣmaṇa: "Inform Rāma that I have come on a mission of grave importance. For I am the messenger of an exceedingly mighty and immeasurably powerful great seer. Because of my mission, I have come here, immensely powerful prince, wishing to see Rāma."

[4–7] When Saumitri had heard those words of his, he immediately informed Rāma that an ascetic had something he wished to communicate. He said: "May you, immensely splendid king, conquer both worlds through righteousness. An ascetic, whose radiance is that of the sun, bringer of light, has come as a messenger to see you." When Rāma had heard the words uttered by Lakṣmaṇa, he said, "Please, dear boy, bid that sage of immense energy, who is bearing someone's message, enter." And Saumitri, saying, "So be it," ushered in the sage, who seemed to be shining with his radiant energy and was blazing, as it were, with rays of light.

[8–11] Approaching the foremost of the Raghus, who was shining with his own blazing energy, the seer addressed Rāghava in sweet words, saying, "May you prosper." Rāma of immense blazing energy honored him, gave him the guest-offering, and then began to inquire about his undisturbed well-being. When he had been asked by Rāma about his well-being, that immensely illustrious and most eloquent sage sat down upon a heavenly seat of gold. Then Rāma said to him, "Welcome, great sage. Now please report the words of him of whom you have come as a messenger."

[12–15] Encouraged by that lion among kings, the sage uttered these words: "This must be related privately; nor should my words be compromised by prying eyes. Rāghava, you must put to death anyone who overhears or might witness this. This must be so if you have any respect for the words of the foremost of sages." Vowing, "So be it," Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa: "Position yourself at the door, great-armed prince, and send the chamberlain away. For, Saumitri, I must put to death anyone who might overhear or witness the conversation between me and the seer, which must be uttered in secret."

[16–17] Then, having thus entrusted Lakṣmaṇa with the guardianship of the door, Rāghava Kākutstha said these words to the sage: "Please tell me

what you have to say. Please tell me without hesitation the message you have in mind and on account of which you were sent. For it is also in my heart."

Sarga 94

[1–3] "Hear now, great-armed and immensely powerful Rāma, the purpose for which I have come. I have been sent by the god Grandfather Brahmā. In a previous existence, heroic conqueror of enemy citadels, I was your son, Kāla, the destroyer of all things, who was produced by your power of creative illusion. The blessed Grandfather, Lord Brahmā, guardian of the worlds, says: 'Great-armed Rāma, your agreement was to protect the heavenly worlds.

[4–6] " 'And long ago, when, through your power of creative illusion, you yourself had drawn in the worlds, you first created me as you lay on the waters in the vast ocean. Then, through your power of creative illusion, having created the serpent Ananta, of immense coils, who lies upon the waters, you engendered those two immensely powerful beings Madhu and Kaiṭabha, covered with the heaps of whose bones this mountain-girded earth became known as Medinī.

[7–10] " 'Then, when you had produced me too, in a lotus—as radiant as the celestial sun—that was growing from your navel, you assigned to me the entire task of the generation of creatures. Since I was entrusted with this burden, I worshipfully approached you, the lord of the universe, saying, "Please, sir, you who are the source of my blazing energy, provide for the protection of these creatures." Moreover, you are unassailable, and therefore, because of your eternal nature, you took on the form of Viṣṇu in order to protect all beings. You are the mighty son of Aditi and the increaser of your brothers' delight. For you render assistance to the worlds whenever the need arises.

[11–15] " 'When all creatures were being terrorized, it was you, foremost of living beings who, desiring to kill Rāvaṇa, set your mind on dwelling among men. At that time, you yourself set the limit of your sojourn at ten thousand years and ten hundred. You became a son through your own intention, and your life span here among men is now completed. And thus, foremost among the best of men, Kāla has approached you. But if, great king, you still wish to serve your subjects, then, by all means,

please remain, hero.’ Thus spoke Grandfather Brahmā. ‘On the other hand, if you desire to regain the world of the gods, Rāghava, then let the gods, having a protector in Viṣṇu, be free from anxiety.’ ”

[16–19] When Rāghava had heard the words that Grandfather Brahmā had spoken, just as they were reported by Kāla, he replied, smiling, to the destroyer of all: “I have heard the extremely marvelous words of the god of gods. Your arrival has produced tremendous delight. Bless you. I shall return from whence I have come. You have come here in accordance with my heart’s desire. I have no hesitation in this regard. I must attend to all the needs of the gods, who are my obedient subjects, and now, at the end of everything, I will do as Grandfather Brahmā says.”

Sarga 95

[1–4] As the two were conversing in this fashion, the holy seer Durvāsas arrived at the king’s gate, anxious to see Rāma. And approaching Saumitri, that foremost of seers said, “Show me in to Rāma at once, lest my purpose be thwarted.” When Lakṣmaṇa, slayer of enemy heroes, had heard the sage’s speech, he respectfully saluted that great seer and spoke these words: “Tell me, holy one, what needs to be done? And what is your purpose? What can I do for you? For, O brahman, Rāghava is busy. Otherwise, please wait a little while.”

[5–9] When that tiger among seers had heard this, choking with rage, he spoke these words to Lakṣmaṇa, burning him up, as it were, with his gaze: “Saumitri, you must announce me to Rāma this instant. Otherwise I shall curse this kingdom, you, the city, Rāghava, Bharata, and whatever progeny you all may have! For I am unable any longer to contain the rage that is in my heart.” When Lakṣmaṇa had heard those terrifying words of the great seer, he reflected in his mind on their import. He announced the seer to Rāghava, after having resolved: “Let me alone die. Let there not be the destruction of everything.”

[10–13] No sooner had King Rāma heard Lakṣmaṇa’s words than he dismissed Kāla and, quickly rushing out, met Atri’s son. Respectfully saluting the great seer, who seemed to glow with his blazing energy, Kākutstha cupped his hands in reverence and said, “What may I do for you?” When the powerful Durvāsas, foremost among sages, had heard the words uttered by Rāma Rāghava, he replied to him, saying: “Listen, O you

who are devoted to righteousness. This very day, Rāghava, I have completed a fast of one thousand years. I desire some freshly prepared food from you, sinless king."

[14–15] When Rāma heard those words, he was filled with great delight, and he brought that foremost of sages some freshly prepared food. When that most excellent of sages had eaten that food, which was like the nectar of immortality, he said, "Well done, Rāma!" and returned to his ashram.

[16–18] When he had departed, Rāghava of immense blazing energy was at first delighted at heart, but then, when he recalled Kāla's words, he was stricken with grief. When he remembered that thing which was too dreadful to contemplate, he was greatly afflicted by grief. His face downcast and his mind distressed, he was unable to speak. But then Rāghava, reflecting in his mind on Kāla's words, said, "All this must pass away." Then that greatly illustrious prince fell silent.

Sarga 96

[1–4] Now, when Lakṣmaṇa saw Rāghava, despondent, with his face downcast—like the moon in eclipse—he, remaining cheerful, spoke to him in sweet words, saying: "You must not suffer anguish for my sake, great-armed warrior. For such is the course of destiny that has been determined by our previous actions. You must keep your promise and slay me without misgiving, gentle brother. For, Kākutstha, men who do not keep their promises go to hell. If you love me, great king, if you hold me in your favor, then kill me without hesitation and thus, uphold righteousness."

[5–7] Addressed in this fashion by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma, the lord of men, his senses reeling, assembled his counselors as well as his *purohita*, and in their midst told them about the arrival of Durvāsas and the promise he had made to the ascetic, just as it had all taken place. When his counselors, along with his preceptors, had heard that, they kept still, but Vasiṣṭha of immense blazing energy spoke these words:

[8–11] "All this was foreseen, great-armed and illustrious Rāma: your terrifying death and your separation from Lakṣmaṇa. Abandon him! Destiny is all-powerful. You must not falsify your promises. For when a promise proves false, righteousness itself is undermined. And if righteousness were undermined, the entire triple world, together with its fixed and moving contents, as well as the hosts of gods and seers, would be

destroyed without a doubt. Therefore, tiger among men, for the sake of the protection of the triple world, you must—this very day—provide for the welfare of the universe through the execution of Lakṣmaṇa.”

[12–13] When Rāma had heard those words, which were fully in keeping with both righteousness and statecraft, he addressed Lakṣmaṇa there in the council of those who had gathered: “There must be no transgression of righteousness. Therefore, I will banish you, Saumitri. For whether it be banishment or execution that is ordained, both are the same to the virtuous.”

[14–18] No sooner had these words been uttered by Rāma than Lakṣmaṇa, his eyes clouded with tears, departed swiftly. But he did not return to his home. Proceeding to the bank of the Sarayū River, he ritually sipped its water and then, cupping his hands in reverence, he closed off his senses and held his breath. Then all the gods, together with Śakra, the troupes of *apsarases*, and the hosts of seers, showered him with flowers as he sat there absorbed in *yoga*, not breathing. And in such a way that no man witnessed it, Śakra took immensely powerful Lakṣmaṇa, still in his earthly body, and entered heaven. Then all of the foremost among the gods, together with the seers, thrilled and delighted, worshiped him, who had returned to his state as the fourth part of Viṣṇu.

Sarga 97

[1–3] After he had banished Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma was consumed with grief and sorrow, and he said this to his *purohita*, his counselors, and the people of the city: “This very day, here in Ayodhyā, I shall consecrate as king the valorous lord Bharata, who is devoted to righteousness. Then I shall depart for the forest. Bring in the requisite materials so that there may be no loss of time. For I will depart this very day by the path that Lakṣmaṇa has taken.”

[4–5] When they heard what Rāghava had said, all his subjects instantly bowed their heads to the ground and became as if lifeless. When Bharata heard Rāma’s words, he too was stunned. But he rejected the kingship and said this to Rāghava:

[6–8] [dd]“I swear to you by truth itself, your majesty, delight of the Raghus, and by the heavenly world as well, that without you, I do not desire kingship. Your majesty, lord of men, you must consecrate these two bards—valorous Kuśa in the kingdom of Kosala and Lava in the northern kingdom.

And let swift-striding messengers go to Śatrughna and, without delay, let them report to him our departure for heaven.”

[9–10] When Vasiṣṭha heard what Bharata had said and saw that the people of the town were downcast and afflicted with grief, he spoke these words: “Rāma, my dear boy, look at your subjects prostrate on the ground. Once you have determined what they desire to be done, you must not do anything to displease them.”

[11–16] Acting on the advice of Vasiṣṭha, Kākutstha, having bidden his subjects to rise, addressed them all in these words: “What must I do?” Then all of his subjects said these words to Rāma: “Wherever you may go, Rāma, we shall follow after you. This is our highest delight. This we regard as our highest duty. Our constant and most deeply cherished desire is set upon following you. If you have any affection for the people of the city, if you have the deepest love for them, then, Kākutstha, let us, along with our sons and wives, accompany you on the path of the virtuous. If we are not to be abandoned by you, Lord, then you must lead us all, whether it be to a penance grove, the inaccessible wilderness, a river, or the ocean.” Recognizing their resolve and reflecting upon both fate and the firm devotion of the townsfolk, he replied, “Very well.”

[17–20] Once Rāghava had reached this decision in this fashion, that very day, he consecrated both of those great bards, Kuśa and Lava—valorous Kuśa in the kingdom of Kosala and Lava in the northern kingdom. And he gave each of them abundant wealth, as well as a thousand chariots, thirty thousand elephants, and ten thousand horses. And thus, they had abundant jewels and great wealth and were surrounded by happy and prosperous people. Once he had consecrated those two valiant princes and dispatched them to their respective cities in this fashion, he sent messengers to great Śatrughna.

Sarga 98

[1–6] Urged on by Rāma’s words, the swift-striding messengers proceeded swiftly to Madhurā without making camp on the way. Then, after three days and nights, when they had reached Madhurā, they immediately reported everything to Śatrughna just as it had taken place. In this fashion, the messengers immediately reported to great Śatrughna everything—the banishment of Lakṣmaṇa, Rāghava’s promise, the consecration of his two

sons, his being followed by the townsfolk, the founding by wise Rāma of Kuśa's charming city named Kuśāvatī on the slopes of the Vindhya mountains, the founding of Śrāvatī, Lava's charming and renowned city, the exodus of the people from Ayodhyā, and Bharata's following Rāghava. Then saying, "You must hurry, your majesty," they fell silent.

[7–10] When that delight of the Raghus had heard about the terrible, impending destruction of his family, he assembled his subjects and his *purohita*, Kāñcana, and related to them everything, just as it had taken place, as well as his own imminent ascension together with his brothers. Then the valiant lord of men consecrated his own two sons. Subāhu received Madhurā and Śatrughātin got Vaidiśa. Dividing the army of Madhurā between his two sons, he established them both as kings endowed with wealth and grain.

[11–16] Then, having sent off Śatrughātin to be king in Vaidiśa, Rāghava went swiftly to Ayodhyā with but a single chariot. There he saw the great king in the company of the immortal sages. He was blazing, as it were, like fire and was clad in a thin linen garment. Cupping his hands in reverence and controlling his senses, that knower of righteousness respectfully saluted Rāma and, reflecting upon righteousness, spoke these words: "Now that I have properly consecrated my two sons, the Rāghavas, and endowed them with wealth, know, your majesty, that I am determined to follow you. And please do not say anything to the contrary with regard to this, for your command is not to be disobeyed. Please do not abandon me, hero, for I am especially devoted." Recognizing how adamant Śatrughna's resolve was, Rāma, the delight of the Raghus, spoke these words to him: "Very well."

[17–20] No sooner had he finished pronouncing these words than the monkeys who could take on any form at will and the hosts of apes and *rākṣasas* arrived in great numbers. Once they learned of Rāma's departure, all those sons of the gods, sons of seers, and sons of *gandharvas* assembled. When they had all assembled there, they respectfully saluted Rāma and said: "Illustrious king, we have come in order to follow you. If, Rāma, bull among men, you were to depart without us, then you would have struck us down as if you were wielding the rod of Yama."

[21–23] When he had thus heard those words of the apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*, he then spoke sweetly to Vibhīṣaṇa in gentle tones: "Vibhīṣaṇa, as long as your people shall endure, you shall live on as the immensely

powerful lord of the *rākṣasas* in Laṅkā. You must protect your subjects in accordance with righteousness. Please do not argue with me."

[24–26] When Kākutstha had addressed him in this fashion, he then said to Hanumān: "Resign yourself to remaining alive, for you must not violate your vow. As long as the tales about me remain current in the world, lord of the tawny monkeys, you must uphold your vow by remaining alive." When he had spoken in this fashion, Kākutstha Rāghava then said to all the other apes and monkeys, "You may depart with me."

Sarga 99

[1–3] Now, when the night had given way to dawn, the immensely illustrious Rāma, broad chested, his eyes like lotus petals, said to his *purohita*, "Let the *agnihotra* vessel, its fire blazing with ghee, go on before, as well as the umbrella consecrated for the *vājapeya*, beautifying the great highway." Then, according to the ritual injunctions, Vasiṣṭha of blazing energy performed the entire sacred rite of departure for the next world, omitting nothing.

[4–9] Then, clad in a garment of linen and invoking the Supreme Brahman, Rāma took up *kuśa* grass with both hands and, fastening it, he prepared to set forth. Uttering no unnecessary words whatsoever at any point, making no unnecessary movements, spurning all comforts on the road, and blazing like the many-rayed sun, he set forth from his house. On Rāma's left side was Padmā, that is, Śrī, in deep concentration. On his right was large-eyed Hrī, and before him was Vyavasāya, resolution incarnate. There were also the various kinds of arrows and his well-strung bow. All of these, taking on human form, respectfully followed Kākutstha. The *vedas* in the form of brahmans, the *Sāvitrīmantra*, protector of all, the syllable *oṃ*, the sacred utterance *vaṣaṭ*, and all the great seers, those gods on earth: all of them, deeply devoted to Rāma Kākutstha, followed him, who had reached the gateway to heaven.

[10–13] As he was proceeding, the women of the inner apartments, together with the elderly, the children, the serving women, the eunuchs, and the male attendants, followed him. And Bharata, accompanied by the women of his inner apartments, followed as well, along with Śatrughna. Then, having vowed their dedication to Rāma Rāghava and thus being utterly devoted to him, the great brahmans, in deep concentration and

accompanied by the *agnihotra* fire, followed that immensely wise Kākutstha, together with their sons and their wives. His counselors and their attendants too, together with their sons, kinsmen, and retinues, all joyously followed Rāma.

[14–18] After them, all the ministers, surrounded by delighted and prosperous people, deeply moved by Rāma's virtues, followed him as he proceeded. That splendid host of monkeys—all of them devoted to Rāma, all of them bathed, joyful, happy, and in fine fettle—was chattering in a frenzy of delight. No one there was despondent, ashamed, or miserable. Instead, all were delighted and joyous. It was a great wonder. The people of the countryside had come merely to witness the king's departure. However, once they had come and witnessed it, they became just as devoted as the others. And so, in great concentration and with the deepest devotion, the apes, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*, as well as the people who dwelt in the city, followed behind.

Sarga 100

[1–4] When he had gone a league and a half, the delight of the Raghus spied the river Sarayū, of holy waters, that lay just before him as he looked to the west. At that very moment, Brahmā, grandfather of the worlds, surrounded by all the gods and great seers and accompanied by hundreds of millions of celestial flying chariots, came to where Kākutstha, who was setting out for heaven, stood. A shower of flowers, scattered by the wind, fell in great abundance.

[5–9] Then, as the sky was filled with the sound of hundreds of trumpets and crowded with *gandharvas* and *apsarases*, Rāma approached the waters of the Sarayū on foot. Then Grandfather Brahmā spoke these words from the sky: "Come, Viṣṇu, bless you. Fortunately you have come, Rāghava. Please, O lord of immense blazing energy, return with your godlike brothers to your own essential Vaiṣṇava form, which is the eternal Brahman. For you are the refuge of the worlds, large-eyed Lord, yet no one other than Māyā, your immemorial consort, truly knows you. You are the Great Being—inconceivable, indestructible, and the sum of all things. O lord of immense blazing energy, please return of your own accord to whichever form you wish."

[10–13] When the immensely wise Rāma had heard those words of Grandfather Brahmā and had confirmed his resolution, he bodily entered, together with his younger brothers, the blazing energy proper to Viṣṇu. Then, once he had returned to his form as Viṣṇu, the divinities—including the *sādhyas*, the hosts of the Maruts together with Indra, led by Agni, and accompanied by the celestial hosts of the seers, the *gandharvas*, the *apsarases*, the great birds, the great serpents, and the *daityas*, *dānavas*, and *rākṣasas*—all worshiped that God. All of them were delighted and joyful. All of them had their dearest wish fulfilled. They all cried out, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" For the highest heaven was free from any impurity.

[14–15] Then Viṣṇu of immense blazing energy said to Grandfather Brahmā: "Please, O lord of firm vows, grant heavenly worlds to all of these hosts of people. For all these resolute devotees, who have abandoned their bodies for my sake, have followed me out of love and are therefore worthy of my devotion."

[16–19] When Lord Brahmā, patriarch of the world, had heard those words of Viṣṇu, he said: "All these who have accompanied you shall go to the worlds known as the Sāntānikas. Even an animal that abandons its life breaths while thinking upon Rāma with devotion shall surely also dwell in Santāna, which is endowed with every virtue and is just next to the Brahmaloka. The monkeys shall return to their own places of birth and so shall the apes. Those of splendid birth shall return to those from whom they issued forth, starting with the gods and including the seers, the great serpents, and the *yakṣas*."

[20–22] When the lord of the gods had spoken in this fashion, everyone proceeded to the Gopratāra *tīrtha*, and there, their eyes overwhelmed with joyful tears, they entered the Sarayū. Each and every living soul who entered the water became filled with joy. Then each one, casting off his or her human body, mounted a flying chariot. Even those born in the wombs of animals, once they reached the waters of the Sarayū, became celestial and shone with a celestial beauty like gods.

[23–25] All beings, whether fixed or moving, upon reaching the waters of the Sarayū and moistening themselves with it, attained the world of the gods. Whatever had been the divine origin of each of the monkeys, apes, and *rākṣasas*, they each entered that, after having deposited their bodies in the water. Once the patriarch of the world had dispatched all of them to

their respective heavens, that immensely wise being, in great delight, returned to heaven together with the thirty gods, who were similarly delighted.

[26] Here ends the foremost of tales, known as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, together with its epilogue. It was composed by Vālmīki and is worshiped by Brahmā.

The end of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*.

a Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
b Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
c Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
d Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
e Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
f Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
g Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
h Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
i Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
j Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
k Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
l Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
m Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
n Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
o Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
p Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
q Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
r Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
s Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
t Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
u Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
v Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
w Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
x Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
y Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
z Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
aa Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
bb Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
cc Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.
dd Emendation: see PVR 7: 1411.

Glossary of Important Sanskrit Words, Proper Nouns, and Epithets

āḍambara: a type of drum
adharma: unrighteousness; what is evil or immoral
Aditi: daughter of Dakṣa; wife of Kaśyapa; mother of the gods
ādityas: a class of gods; sons of Aditi
Ādityas: the collective name of a group of deities, normally seven or eight in number, chief of whom is Varuṇa
Agastya: a famous sage; pot-born son of Mitra-Varuṇa and Urvaśī; associated with the south; narrates history of Rāvaṇa and the *rākṣasas*
Agni: god of fire
Ahalyā: wife of Gautama; cursed by her husband after she was seduced/raped by the god Indra
Aikṣvāka: descendant of Ikṣvāku, used mainly of Daśaratha and Rāma
Airāvata: a celestial elephant; Indra's mount
ājas: a class of seers
Akampana: a *rākṣasa* warrior; slain by Hanumān
Akṣa: son of Rāvaṇa and Mandodarī; slain by Hanumān
Amarāvatī: Indra's heavenly city
Analā: eldest daughter of Vibhīṣaṇa
Anañga: "bodiless"; epithet of Kāma, god of love
Ananta: the great snake associated with Viṣṇu; said to support the earth
Anaraṇya: solar dynasty king slain by Rāvaṇa; predicts that an Ikṣvāku king will kill him
Anasūyā: wife of the sage Atri; famous for her devotion and chastity
Añga: country where Romapāda ruled
Añgada: (1) monkey prince; son of Vālin; (2) a son of Lakṣmaṇa; rules city of Añgadīyā in the country of Kārupatha
Añgadīyā: (1) capital city of Kārāpatha; ruled by Añgada; (2) son of Lakṣmaṇa
Anila: a name of the god of wind
Añjana: (1) name of a cosmic elephant; (2) name of a mountain
Añjanā: mother of Hanumān
Anuhlāda: younger son of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu
apsarases: celestial maidens or nymphs, known for their beauty; frequently seen in the service of the gods, especially Indra
Arajā: daughter of Uśanas Kāvya; raped by Daṇḍa; cursed by her father
Ariṣṭanemi: "having an uninjured wheel-felly"; epithet for the sage Kaśyapa; father of Garuḍa and Aruṇa; husband of Vinatā
Arjuna Kārtavīrya: thousand-armed king of Māhiṣmatī; defeats and binds Rāvaṇa
Arundhatī: wife of the sage Vasiṣṭha

aśoka: grove; site of Sītā's confinement in the city of Laṅkā
asuras: a class of demons; the half brothers and rivals of the *devas*, "gods"
aśvamedha: "horse sacrifice"; important vedic sacrifice
Aśvapati: father of Kaikeyī; maternal grandfather of Bharata; king of Rājagṛha
Aśvins: twin deities of the vedic pantheon renowned for their beauty
Atikāya: Rāvaṇa's son; *rākṣasa* warrior slain by Lakṣmaṇa
avatāra: "incarnation"; used primarily of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu
Ayodhyā: capital city of the Ikṣvākus
Bala (*v.l.* Vala): demon slain by Indra; "slayer of Bala" is a common epithet of Indra
bali: a type of offering commonly made of grain, rice, or other food
Bali: Bali Vairocana, king of the *asuras*
Bhaga: one of the eight Ādityas
Bhagīratha: son of Dilīpa; great-great-grandson of Sagara; brings Ganges to earth
Bhāgīrathī: "daughter of Bhagīratha"; epithet of the Ganges
Bharadvāja: a sage; disciple of Vālmīki; renders hospitality to Rāma and Bharata; tells Rāma how to reach Mount Citrakūṭa; father of Devavarṇinī; grandfather of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa
Bharata: Daśaratha's second son; son of Kaikeyī; younger brother of Rāma
Bhārgava: a powerful brahman family descended from the sage Bhṛgu; as a patronymic, refers to any descendant of that family
Bhava: one of the names of Śiva
bherī: a type of drum
Bhogavatī: city of the serpents, conquered by Rāvaṇa
Bhṛgu: a great brahman sage; patriarch of the Bhārgava family
Brahmā: the creator divinity of the Hindu "trinity"; "Grandfather" of all living creatures; granter of boons
Brahmahatyā: female personification of *brahmahatyā*
brahmahatyā: the sin of killing a brahman
Brahmaloka: the world or heaven of Brahmā
brahman: (1) a name for the Indian religio-philosophical concept of the impersonal and attributeless principle underlying existence; (2) a specific class of sacrificial priests
brahman: one of the four classes of traditional Hindu society; the priestly class
Brahmarāśi: name of an asterism
Bṛhaspati: preceptor of the gods; *purohita*, "family preceptor" of Indra
Budha: a sage; son of Soma; lover of Ilā; father of Purūravas
Caitraratha: Kubera's pleasure garden on Mount Meru
Candra: (1) the moon god; (2) a mountain situated in the midst of the ocean of milk
Candraketu: a son of Lakṣmaṇa; rules city of Candrakānta in the country of Malla
Citrakūṭa: mountain where Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa first live during their exile
Cyavana: a Bhārgava brahman; leader of the delegation of sages from the Yamunā region
Dadhimukha: a monkey; maternal uncle of Sugrīva; guardian of the *madhuvana*
daityas or *daiteyas*: a class of demons descended from Diti
dānavas: a class of demons descended from Danū
Daṇḍa: dull-witted royal son of Ikṣvāku; founds city of Madhumanta; rapes Arajā; cursed by her father, Uśanas Kāvya
Daṇḍaka: forest where Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa spend the greater part of their exile
Danu: (1) father of Kabandha; (2) a patronymic of Kabandha, cursed to become a *rākṣasa*
Danū: daughter of Dakṣa; wife of Kaśyapa; mother of the demons known as *dānavas*
Daśagrīva: "Ten-necked"; original name of Rāvaṇa

Daśaratha: king of Ayodhyā; father of Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, and Śatrughna
Dāśaratha or Dāśarathi: "descendant of Daśaratha"; common patronymic of Rāma and his brothers
Devāntaka or Surāntaka: a *rākṣasa* warrior slain by Hanumān
Devayānī: wife of Yayāti; daughter of Uśanas Kāvya; mother of Yadu
Dharaṇī: name of Mādhavī, the earth goddess
Dharma: god of righteousness
dharma: righteousness; law; what is good or moral
Dhruva: the pole star
Dhūmrākṣa: a *rākṣasa* warrior slain by Hanumān
ḍiṇḍima: a type of drum
Diti: daughter of Dakṣa; wife of Kaśyapa; mother of the demons known as *daityas*
Droṇa: a mountain situated in the midst of the ocean of milk
Dundubhi: (1) a demon slain by Vālin; Rāma kicks his corpse to demonstrate his strength to Sugrīva; identified as both a *dānava* and an *asura*; (2) an *asura*, son of Maya
Durvāsas: an irascible sage; predicts Rāma's future; interrupts Rāma's meeting with Kāla
Dūṣaṇa: a general in Khara's *rākṣasa* army in Janasthāna; slain by Rāma
Gāndhāra: a country on the banks of the Sindhu River
gandharvas: a class of semidivine beings known for their musical abilities; massacred by Bharata; *gandharva* women are noted for their beauty
Ganges: a famous sacred river of ancient and modern India; personified as the daughter of Himalaya; sister of Pārvatī
Garuḍa or Garutmant: king of birds; Viṣṇu's mount; son of Kaśyapa and Vinatā; frees Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa from Indrajit's serpent weapons
Gautama: a sage; husband of Ahalyā; father of Śatānanda
Godāvarī: a river in the Deccan
Guha: king of the Niṣādas and lord of Śṛṅgaverapura; assists Rāma during his exile; hosts Bharata and his army
guhyakas: demi-gods who attend Kubera and guard his treasures
Haimavatī: daughter of Himavant (Himalaya); patronymic of Umā and her sister, the river Ganges
Hanumān: Rāma's devoted monkey companion; son of the wind god; counselor to Sugrīva; finds Sītā; fights for Rāma
Hara: one of the names of Śiva
Hari: one of the names of Viṣṇu
Hemā: an *apsaras*; friend of Svayaṃprabhā; wife of the *daitya* Maya; mother of Mandodarī
Himalaya[s]: a mountain range and king of the mountains; has two daughters—Umā, the wife of Śiva, and the river Ganges
Himavant: a variant of Himalaya
Hiraṇyakaśipu: a *daitya* slain by the *Narasiṃhāvatāra* (Man-Lion) of Viṣṇu
homa: a type of oblation, commonly consisting of "ghee," or clarified butter
Hrī: goddess of modesty
hum: sacred or mystical syllable used in spells, often destructively
Ikṣvāku: (1) patronymic ancestor and family name of royal House of Ayodhyā; (2) son of Manu; ancestor of Rāma's lineage; father of Daṇḍa
Ila: son of Kardama; king of Bahli; transformed into a woman, Ilā
Ilā: originally Ila; a king transformed into a woman by curse of Śiva; wife of Budha; mother of Purūravas
Indra: king of the *devas*, "gods"; leads their hosts into battle against the *asuras*; slayer of Vṛtra and other *asuras*; captured by Indrajit

Indrajit: “conqueror of Indra”; epithet of Rāvaṇa’s sorcerer son Meghanāda Rāvaṇi; captures Indra in battle; slain by Lakṣmaṇa

itihāsa: “so indeed it was”; history

Jābāli: a minister of Daśaratha; tries to persuade Rāma to return from exile

Jāhnavī: “daughter of Jahnu”; epithet of the Ganges

Jāmadagnya: *see* Rāma Jāmadagnya

Jāmbavān: king of the *ṛkṣas*; monkey general; sends Hanumān to bring the mountain of healing herbs; son of Brahmā and earthly son of Gadgada

Jambūdvīpa: the Indian subcontinent

Janaka: lord of Mithilā; adoptive father of Sītā

Jānakī: “daughter of Janaka”; common patronymic of Sītā, wife of Rāma

Janasthāna: part of the Daṇḍaka forest and residence of Śūrpaṇakhā, sister of Ravaṇa and his cousin-brother Khara; site of Rāma’s battle with Khara and Dūṣaṇa

Jaṭāyus: a vulture; friend of Daśaratha; slain by Rāvaṇa while trying to prevent Sītā’s abduction

Jayā: daughter of Dakṣa; wife of Brahmā; mother of Rāma’s divine weapons

Jayanta: (1) Indra’s son; wounded by Indrajit; rescued by Puloman; (2) minister of Daśaratha

Kabandha: son of Danu; a *rākṣasa* slain by Rāma

Kaikasī: daughter of Sumālin; second wife of Viśravas; mother of Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, and Sūrpaṇakhā

Kaikeyī (*v.l.* Kaikayī): “daughter of Kekaya” or “lady of Kekaya”; patronymic or epithet of a junior wife of Daśaratha; mother of Bharata; schemes with Mantharā to have her son consecrated in Rāma’s place

Kailāsa: a mountain peak in the Himalayas; abode of Śiva and Pārvatī

Kākutstha: “descendant of Kakutstha”; a common patronymic of Rāma and his brothers

Kāla: time incarnate; name of the god of death; visits Rāma in the guise of an ascetic

Kalmāṣapāda: a king; ancestor of Rāma cursed by Vasiṣṭha to become a cannibal; also called Mitrasaha and Saudāsa

Kāma: god of love

Kandarpa: epithet of Kāma, god of love

Kārtikeya (*v.l.* Kārttikeya): “son of the Kṛttikās”; matronymic; son born from Śiva’s semen; his stepmothers are the Kṛttikās

Kaśyapa or Kāśyapa: son of the sage Marīci; husband of Diti and Aditi; father of *ādityas* and *daityas*

Kāśyapa: “descendant of Kaśyapa”; patronymic; father of Vibhāṇḍaka; grandfather of Ṛśyaśṛṅga

Kausalyā: “lady of Kosala”; epithet of senior wife of Daśaratha; mother of Rāma

Kauśika: “a descendant of Kuśa”; generally a patronymic given to Viśvāmitra

Kaustubha: precious gem produced from the churning of the ocean

Kāvya: “descendant of Kavi”; patronymic of Bhṛgu’s son; usually called Uśanas Kāvya or Śukra; preceptor of the *asuras* and other demons

Kekaya: (1) name of the father of Kaikeyī; (2) name of country of Kaikeyī’s birth in northwest India

Kesarin: a monkey; Hanumān’s nominal father

Keśava: one of the names of Viṣṇu

Khara: “cousin-brother” of Rāvaṇa and Śūrpaṇakhā; slain by Rāma in the Daṇḍaka forest

kiṃkaras: a class of *rākṣasas*

kiṃpuruṣas: see *kinnaras*

kinnaras: a class of semidivine beings who dwell in the Himalayas; sometimes represented as having the head of a horse and a human body; their women are famed for their beauty

Kīrti: goddess of fame

Kiṣkindhā: a city (sometimes a cave) inhabited by the monkeys

Kosala: kingdom of the Ikṣvākus
Kṛśāśva's sons: the personified weapons that Viśvāmitra gives Rāma
Kṛttikās: the Pleiades; stepmothers of Kārtikeya
kshatriya: one of the four classes of traditional Hindu society; the warrior class
Kubera: god of wealth; called Vaiśravaṇa, "son of Viśravas"; elder stepbrother of Rāvaṇa; king of the *yakṣas* and the *kinnaras*
Kumāra: name of Śiva's son; *see* Kārtikeya
Kumbhakarṇa: gargantuan brother of Rāvaṇa; cursed to long sleep; slain by Rāma
Kuśa: (1) a great sage; the mind-born son of Brahmā; his great-grandson is Viśvāmitra; (2) a son of Rāma and Sītā; twin brother of Lava; disciple of Vālmīki; singer of the *Rāmāyaṇa* at Rāma's *aśvamedha*; consecrated by Rāma in kingdom of Kosala
Kuśadhvaja: Janaka's younger brother and ruler of Sāṃkāśyā; his two daughters, Māṇḍavī and Śrutakīrti, marry Bharata and Śatrughna, respectively
Lakṣmaṇa: son of Daśaratha by Sumitrā; twin brother of Śatrughna; constant companion of Rāma
Lakṣmī: goddess of wealth and fortune
Lañkā: Rāvaṇa's capital city; location of Sītā's confinement
Lava: a son of Rāma and Sītā; twin brother of Kuśa; disciple of Vālmīki; singer of the *Rāmāyaṇa* at Rāma's *aśvamedha*; consecrated by Rāma in the northern kingdom [of Kosala]
Lavaṇa: a malevolent *asura* or *rākṣasa* slain by Śatrughna
Madana: epithet of Kāma, the god of love
Mādhavī: epithet of the goddess of the earth, also known as Dharaṇī; mother of Sītā
Madhu: (1) an *asura* slain by Viṣṇu; (2) a *rākṣasa* kinsman of Rāvaṇa; (3) a benevolent *asura*, father of Lavaṇa
Mahādeva: "the great god"; epithet of Śiva
Mahendra: one of the seven principal mountains of Jambūdvīpa; mountain from which Hanumān begins his leap to Lañkā
Maheśvara: "the great lord"; epithet of Śiva
Mahodara: *rākṣasa* warrior; Rāvaṇa's "cousin-brother"; slain by the monkey Nīla
Maināka: mountain that offers Hanumān refuge during his leap across the ocean
Maithilī: "woman of Mithilā"; epithet of Sītā
Malaya: one of the seven principal mountains of Jambūdvīpa
Mālin: a *rākṣasa*; son of Sukeśa and the *gandharvī* Devavatī
Mālyavān: great-uncle and adviser to Rāvaṇa
Mālyavān: name of a mountain where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa spend the rainy season, also called Mount Prasravaṇa, "The Mountain Rich in Streams"
Mānasa: lake on Mount Kailāsa created by Brahmā; the Sarayū River flows from it
Mandākinī: river flowing near Mount Citrakūṭa
Mandara: mountain used as the churning rod in the churning of the ocean
Māṇḍavī: elder daughter of Janaka's brother, Kuśadhvaja; wife of Bharata
Māndhātṛ: a king; ancestor of Rāma; slain by Lavaṇa
Mandodarī: daughter of the *daitya* Maya and the *apsaras* Hemā; chief queen of Rāvaṇa
Manmatha: epithet of Kāma
Mantharā: (1) daughter of Virocana; killed by Indra; (2) hunchbacked servant of Kaikeyī
mantra: a sacred or mystical formula
Manu: traditionally considered the father of the human race; legendary founder of the Ikṣvāku dynasty
Marīca Kāśyapa: *see* Kāśyapa

Mārīca: a *rākṣasa*; son of Sunda and Tāṭakā; Rāvaṇa's ally; aids in the abduction of Sītā; turns himself into a magical deer; slain by Rāma
marīcipas: a class of seers
Māruta: name of Vāyu, god of wind; father of Hanumān
Māruti: "son of Māruta"; patronymic of Hanumān
Maruts: the storm gods; sons of Āditi; companions of Indra
Marutta: king of Uśīrabīja; defeated by Rāvaṇa
māṣas: a class of seers
Mātali: charioteer of Indra
Matañga: a sage; lives near Ṛśyamūka mountain; curses Vālin to die if he comes there; Rāma and Sītā visit his ashram
Mātariśvan: epithet of Vāyu, god of wind
Māyā: "divine illusion"; immemorial consort of Viṣṇu
Maya: an *asura* lord; architect of the *asuras*; father-in-law of Rāvaṇa
Meghanāda: "roaring like a thundercloud"; epithet of Indrajit; son of Rāvaṇa; wounds Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and the monkeys; defeats and captures Indra
Menā: wife of Himalaya; mother of Umā and Ganges
Menakā: an *apsaras* sent by Indra to seduce Viśvāmitra
Meru: the name of a mountain; the axis mundi
Mithilā: capital of the kingdom of Videha; ruled by Janaka
Mitra: a god; curses Urvaśī to live on earth with Purūravas
Mitrasaha: *see* Kalmāṣapāda
mṛdañga: a type of drum
Mṛtyu: "death"; name of Yama, the god of death
Mūla: an asterism
muraja: a type of drum
Nala: a monkey; son of Viśvakarman; designs the bridge to Lañkā for Rāma and his army
Nalakūbara: nephew of Rāvaṇa; lover of Rambhā; curses Rāvaṇa to die if he forces himself on a woman
Namuci: an *asura* slain by Indra
Nandana: the pleasure garden of Indra
Nandi(n) or Nandīśvara: a minister of Śiva
Nandigrāma: village where Bharata lived during Rāma's exile
Nārada: a divine sage; gives discourse on the *yugas*; tells Rāvaṇa to fight Yama; tells Rāma of the asceticism of Śambūka
Narāntaka: a *rākṣasa* warrior; slain by Añgada
Nārāyaṇa: one of the names of Viṣṇu; defeats *rākṣasas*
Narmadā: a river in western India; scene of combat between Rāvaṇa and Arjuna Kārtavīrya
Nikumbha: son of Kumbhakarṇa; adviser to Rāvaṇa; slain by Hanumān
Nikumbhilā: (1) a goddess worshiped by the *rākṣasa* women; (2) a sacred grove where Indrajit sacrifices
Nimi: a king cursed by Vasiṣṭha; granted a boon by the gods to live in people's eyes
Nirṛti: goddess of chaos
Niṣāda: a tribal hunter who slays the male of a pair of mating *krauñca* birds, thus inspiring Vālmīki to compose the first *śloka,* "verse," of poetry
Niṣādas: forest-dwelling hunters and fishermen, ruled by Guha
Nivātakavacas: a clan of demons; allies of Rāvaṇa
Nṛga: a king cursed to become a lizard

om: a sacred, auspicious syllable
Pāka: a demon slain by Indra; the deed gives rise to the common epithet of the great god Pākaśāsana, “Chastiser of Pāka”
Pampā: the lake where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa first encounter Hanumān and Sugrīva
paṇava: type of drum
Pañcavaṭī: the forest where Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa first live during their exile
Parjanya: god of rain
Pārvatī: epithet of Umā
paṭaha: a type of drum
Pātāla: a netherworld, abode of the serpents; its capital city is Bhogavatī
Paulastya: “descendant of Pulastya”; patronymic of Rāvaṇa
piśācas: a class of demons of a particularly low order
Prahasta: a *rākṣasa* counselor to Rāvaṇa; *rākṣasa* warrior; father of Jambumālin; slain by Nīla
Prajāpati: “lord of creatures”; epithet of Brahmā
Prajāpatis: the mind-born sons of Brahmā
Prasravaṇa: “The Mountain Rich in Streams”; the mountain where Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa spend the rainy season; also called Mount Mālyavān
Pulastya: mind-born son of Brahmā; grandfather of Rāvaṇa; asks Arjuna Kārtavīrya to release Rāvaṇa
Puloman: name of a demon; father of Indra’s wife, Śacī
purohita: household priest or family preceptor
Pūru: younger son of Yayāti by Śarmiṣṭhā; takes on his father’s curse of decrepitude; inherits his father’s kingdom
Purūravas: son of Budha and Ilā; king in Pratiṣṭhāna
Pūṣan: a solar god in vedic mythology
Puṣkal(r)a: son of Bharata; rules in Puṣkarāvatī
Puṣpa(ka): flying palace stolen by Rāvaṇa from Kubera Vaiśravaṇa; gifted to Rāma
Rāghava: “descendant of Raghu”; common patronymic of Rāma and his brothers
Raghu: son of Kakutstha and ancestor of Rāma
Rāhu: an *asura*; he causes eclipses by swallowing the sun or the moon
Rājagṛha: capital city of the Kekayas
rājasūya: great sacrifice performed by a universal monarch as a sign of undisputed sovereignty
rākṣasas: a class of violent and bloodthirsty demons regarded as the implacable enemies of brahmanical culture and civilization; their king is the ten-headed Rāvaṇa, who rules from the island-fortress of Laṅkā
Rāma Dāśarathi: eldest son of Daśaratha by Kausalyā and hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*
Rāma Jāmadagnya: known also as Bhārgava Rāma or Paraśurāma; son of the sage Jamadagni; confronts and then yields to Rāma
Rambhā: an *apsaras*; attempts to seduce Viśvāmitra but is cursed by him; loved by Tumburu; raped by Rāvaṇa
Rasātala: name of an underworld
Rati: wife of Kāma, the god of love
Rāvaṇa: main antagonist of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; overlord of the *rākṣasas*; also called Daśagrīva, “Ten-necked”
Rāvani: “son of Rāvaṇa”; patronymic of Meghanāda Indrajit
ṛkṣas: an unidentified type of primate; translated as “ape” in order to distinguish these animals from other simians
Ṛkṣarajas: a monkey; biological father of Vālin and Sugrīva

Ṛkṣavant: the name of a mountain
Rohiṇī: a daughter of Dakṣa; favorite consort of the moon; a constellation
Romapāda: king of Añga; friend of Daśaratha; father of Śāntā; the father-in-law of Ṛśyaśṛñga
Ṛśyamūka or Ṛṣyamūka: mountain where Rāma meets Sugrīva
Ṛśyaśṛñga: the innocent boy-sage; son of Vibhāṇḍaka; husband of Śāntā; performs sacrifice for Daśaratha
Rudra: one of the names of Śiva
Rudras: a class of gods; sons or companions of the storm god
Rumā: a wife of Sugrīva
Śabalā: Vasiṣṭha's wish-fulfilling cow; name of Nṛga's cow
Śabarī: ascetic woman visited by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in the forest
Śacī: consort of Indra; daughter of Puloman
Śacī's lord: common epithet of Indra
Sagara: an Ikṣvāku king; ancestor of Rāma; has two wives, Keśinī, on whom he fathers one son, Asamañja, and Sumati, on whom he fathers sixty thousand sons
Sāgara: god of the ocean
Śakra: "mighty one"; common epithet of Indra
Sālakaṭañkaṭā: daughter of Sandhyā; mother of the *rākṣasa* Sukeśa, whom she abandons
Śambara: an *asura*; enemy of Indra
Śambasādana: an *asura* slain by Kesarin
Śambūka: *śūdra* ascetic executed by Rāma
Saṃpāti: (1) a vulture; brother of Jaṭāyus; aids the monkeys in their search for Sītā; (2) a *rākṣasa* counselor of Vibhīṣaṇa; (3) a monkey
Samudra: god of the ocean; *see* Sāgara
Sanatkumāra: name of a seer who tells the Ṛśyaśṛñga story
sandhyā rites: (1) daily vedic rites consisting of the sipping of water, prayers, and *mantras*, especially the *Gāyatrīmantra*; (2) Sandhyā, "Twilight"; mother of Sālakaṭañkaṭā
Śañkara: one of the names of Śiva
Śāntā: Romapāda's daughter; Ṛśyaśṛñga's wife
śarabha: a mythical beast
Śarabhañga: an ascetic whom Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa seek out after their encounter with the *rākṣasa* Virādha
Saramā: a *rākṣasa* woman; comforts Sītā during her captivity; wife of Vibhīṣaṇa
Sāraṇa: a *rākṣasa* spy
Sarasvatī: (1) goddess of speech; (2) name of a river
Sarayū: river flowing on the outskirts of Ayodhyā
Śārdūla: a *rākṣasa* spy
Śarmiṣṭhā: a *daitya* woman; daughter of Vṛṣaparvan; beloved wife of Yayāti; mother of Pūru
śāstra: the collective textual scholarship of a field of knowledge, for example, law or literature.
Śatānanda: son of Gautama and Ahalyā; preceptor of Janaka; narrates the story of the conflict between Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha
Śatrughna: youngest son of Daśaratha by Sumitrā; twin brother of Lakṣmaṇa; Bharata's friend and constant companion; kills Lavaṇa and founds the city of Madhurā
Satyavatī: wife of Ṛcīka and sister of Viśvāmitra; she follows her husband to heaven and becomes the divine river Kauśikī
Saudāsa: a king cursed by Vasiṣṭha to become a cannibal; also called Kalmāṣapāda and Mitrasaha
Saumitri: "son of Sumitrā"; matronymic of Lakṣmaṇa
Savitṛ: "the impeller"; epithet of Sūrya in his role as the "impeller" of all creatures

siṃha bird: probably the roc, a mythical bird
Siṃhikā: a *rākṣasa* woman; tries to obstruct Hanumān's leap; slain by Hanumān
Sītā: daughter of Janaka; wife of Rāma; heroine of the *Rāmāyaṇa*
Śiva: one of the three main gods of the Hindu trinity, along with Brahmā and Viṣṇu; famed for his asceticism; husband of Umā (Pārvatī)
Soma: name of Candra, god of the moon
Śrī: goddess of royal fortune, or beauty; consort of Viṣṇu; incarnated as Sītā
Śṛṅgavera: a city on the Ganges River ruled by the Niṣāda king Guha
Śrutakīrti: Kuśadhvaja's youngest daughter; wife of Śatrughna
śruti: "what is heard"; the revealed corpus of the brahmanical tradition; the vedic corpus
Sthāṇu: one of the names of Śiva
Subāhu: (1) a *rākṣasa*; brother of Mārīca; slain by Rāma; (2) son of Śatrughna; becomes king of Madhurā
śūdra: one of the four classes of traditional Hindu society; the servant class
Sugrīva: king of the monkeys; son of Sūrya; younger brother of Vālin; ally of Rāma
Śuka: a *rākṣasa* spy
Sukeśa: a *rākṣasa*; son of Vidyutkeśa and his wife Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā; abandoned by his mother; father of Mālin, Mālyavān, and Sumālin
Suketu: a *yakṣa*; father of Tāṭakā
Śukra or Śukrācārya: the sage Uśanas Kāvya; a scion of the Bhārgava *gotra*; identified with the planet Venus; hereditary *purohita* of the *asuras*; father of Devayānī; curses his son-in-law, Yayāti
Sumāli(n): a *rākṣasa*; father of Kaikasī
Sumantra: charioteer and adviser to King Daśaratha; Rāma's charioteer and counselor; drives Rama, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa on their journey into exile; drives Sītā on her way to banishment
Sumitrā: junior-most wife of Daśaratha; mother of the twins Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna
Śunaḥśepa: middle son of Ṛcīka, a Bhārgava sage; sold by his parents to the Ikṣvāku king Ambarīṣa as a replacement sacrificial victim; saved by Viśvāmitra
Suparṇa: name of the bird Garuḍa, Viṣṇu's mount
Supārśva: a *rākṣasa* adviser to Rāvaṇa
Surasā: a goddess; takes the form of a *rākṣasī* to test Hanumān's strength and valor
Śūrpaṇakhā: the sister of Rāvaṇa; attempts to seduce Rāma in the Pañcavaṭī; disfigured by Lakṣmaṇa
Sūrya: sun god; father of Sugrīva
Suṣeṇa: monkey physician; heals wounded Lakṣmaṇa; father-in-law of Sugrīva
Sutīkṣṇa: a sage whom Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa visit during their exile
Suvela: a mountain climbed by Rāma and his forces
svāhā: (1) a ritual utterance; (2) goddess, wife of Agni
Svayaṃprabhā: daughter of Merusāvarṇī; friend of Hemā who guards her dwelling; delivers monkeys from cave
Śveta: ascetic king of Vidarbha; doomed to eat his own corpse
Takṣa: son of Bharata; rules in Takṣaśīlā
Takṣaka: a serpent lord defeated by Rāvaṇa
Tamasā: a river near the Ganges on whose banks Vālmīki has his ashram
Tāra: a monkey general of Sugrīva
Tārā: wife of Vālin
Tāṭakā: a *yakṣa* woman who is cursed to become a *rākṣasī*; mother of the *rākṣasa* Mārīca; at Viśvāmitra's behest, Rāma kills her
Trijaṭā: a *rākṣasa* woman who comforts Sītā during her captivity; has dream of Rāma's victory
Trikūṭa: three-peaked mountain on which the city of Laṅkā is said to be located

Tripura: the city of the demons; destroyed by Śiva
Triśaṅku: Ikṣvāku king; ancestor of Rāma; desires to obtain heaven in his mortal form; aided by Viśvāmitra
Triśiras or Trimūrdhan: “three-headed”; a *rākṣasa* warrior; slain by Hanumān
Tumburu: one of the kings of the *gandharvas*; loves the *apsaras* Rambhā
Tvaṣṭṛ: divine craftsman of the Indian pantheon
Uccaiḥśravas: divine horse produced during the churning of the ocean; given to Indra
Umā: wife of Śiva; daughter of the mountain Himalaya; often called Pārvatī; allows Ila, who was transformed into a woman, to alternate between genders
Ūrmilā: daughter of Janaka and wife of Lakṣmaṇa
Urvaśī: an *apsaras*
Uśanas or Uśanas Kāvya: preceptor of the *asuras*; *see* Śukrācārya
Vaideha: “man of Videha”; epithet of Janaka
Vaidehī: “woman of Videha”; epithet of Sītā
vaikhānasas: a class of supernatural sages born from the nails and hair of Brahmā
Vainateya: “son of Vinatā”; matronymic of Garuḍa and Aruṇa
Vairocana: *see* Bali
Vaiśravaṇa: “descendant of Viśravas”; patronymic of Kubera, god of wealth
vaiśya: one of the four classes of traditional Hindu society; the merchant and farmer class
Vaitaraṇī: the river of hell
Vaivasvata: “son of Vivasvant”; patronymic of Yama
vajra: (1) a thunderbolt; (2) the thunderbolt weapon of the god Indra
Vajradaṃṣṭra: a *rākṣasa* adviser to Rāvaṇa
Vajrahanu: a *rākṣasa* adviser to Rāvaṇa
vālakhilyas: a supernatural class of tiny sages
Vālin: king of the monkeys; husband of Tārā; son of Indra; elder brother of Sugrīva, killed by Rāma
Vālmīki (*v.l.* Vālmīka): sage and composer of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; shelters Sītā and raises her sons; brings them back to Ayodhyā
Vāmadeva: a minister of Daśaratha
Varuṇa: lord of the ocean; regent of the west
Vāruṇī: Varuṇa’s daughter; comes forth during the churning of the ocean; the personification of wine
vaṣaṭ: an utterance said at the end of a sacrificial verse
Vāsava: a name of Indra
Vasiṣṭha: the *purohita*, “family preceptor,” of the Ikṣvākus; rival of Viśvāmitra
Vāsudeva: a name of Viṣṇu; assumes the form of the sage Kapila
Vāsuki: a great serpent used as the rope in the churning of the ocean
Vasus: a class of deities, normally eight in number
Vātāpi: a *rākṣasa*; brother of Namuci; takes the form of a ram that was eaten by some brahmans; killed by Agastya
Vāyu: god of the wind; deforms the daughters of Kuśanābha; father of Hanumān
vedas: the ancient scriptures of the brāhmaṇic tradition
Vedavatī: a brahman woman assaulted by Rāvaṇa; vows to be reborn to destroy him
Vibhāṇḍaka: son of Kāśyapa; father of Ṛśyaśṛṅga
Vibhīṣaṇa: a *rākṣasa* lord; defector brother of Rāvaṇa; ally of Rāma; instructed by Rāma to remain on earth to rule the *rākṣasas*
Videha: (1) epithet of Janaka; (2) kingdom of Janaka
vidyādharas: a class of semidivine beings; *vidyādhara* women are famed for their beauty
Vidyujjihva: (1) a *dānava* lord; husband of Śūrpaṇakhā; (2) *rākṣasa* master of illusion

Vidyutkeśa: a *rākṣasa*; son of Heti and his wife Bhayā; husband of Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā; father of Sukeśa
Vinatā: (1) a *rākṣasī* who taunts Sītā; (2) mother of Garuḍa and Aruṇa
Vindhya: a mountain range north of the Narmadā River; traditional boundary between North and South India
Virādha: a *rākṣasa*; attempts to abduct Sītā; slain by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa
Virocana: an *asura* king; ancestor of Bali; his daughter, Mantharā, is slain by Indra
Virūpākṣa: a *rākṣasa* warrior; field marshal of Rāvaṇa; slain by Sugrīva
Viśāla: son of Ikṣvāku and Alambusā; founder of the city of Viśālā
Viśālā: a famous city through which Rāma passes on his journey to Mithilā
Viṣṇu: one of the three principal gods ("the trinity") of the Hindu pantheon along with Brahmā and Śiva; incarnates on earth in the form of Rāma in order to kill Rāvaṇa
Viśravas: a brahman sage; father of Kubera, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, and Śūrpaṇakhā
Viśvakarman: architect of the gods; builds Laṅkā; father of the monkey architect Nala
Viśvāmitra: originally a kshatriya king; becomes a brahman through severe austerities; mentor of Rāma; gives Rāma divine weapons; rival of Vasiṣṭha
Viśvāvasu: one of the kings of the *gandharvas*
Viṭapāvatī: name for Alakā, city of the *yakṣas*
Vivasvant: a name of Sūrya, the sun god
Vṛtra: a powerful brahman ascetic *asura* or *daitya* killed by Indra
Yadu: elder son of Yayāti by Devayānī; cursed by his father
yajña: ritual sacrifice
yakṣa: a class of semidivine beings associated with Kubera; *yakṣa* women are known for their beauty
Yama: god of death; regent of the south; battles Rāvaṇa
Yamunā: a famous and holy river
yātudhāna: used as a term for *rākṣasas* or for a specific class of *rākṣasas*
Yayāti: an ancient king; son of Nahuṣa; husband of Devayānī and Śarmiṣṭhā; cursed by his father-in-law, Uśanas Kāvya; father of Yadu and Pūru; exchanges his old age with his youngest son Pūru
Yudhājit: a son of the king of the Kekayas; a brother of Kaikeyī; maternal uncle of Bharata
Yūpākṣa: (1) a *rākṣasa* warrior; killed by Hanumān; (2) a *rākṣasa* minister of Rāvaṇa; wakes Kumbhakarṇa

Glossary of Weapons

arrows
- arrow: *bāṇa*, *mārgaṇa*, *iṣu*, etc.
- arrowhead: *bāṇa*, *śalya*
- barbed: *vikarṇi*
- broad-headed: *nālika*
- crescent-headed: *bhalla*
- half-iron: *ardhanārāca*
- half-moon-headed: *ardhacandra*
- heads like calves' teeth: *vatsadanta*
- heads like folded palms: *añjalika*
- heads like herons' feathers: *śilīmukha*
- heads like the tips of *karavīra* leaves: *vipāṭha* (*oleander Nerium odorum*)
- heads with ear-like blades: *karṇi*
- horseshoe-headed: *kṣurapra*
- iron: *nārāca*
- lions' fangs: *siṃhadaṃṣṭra*
- long-headed: *śalya*
- razor-tipped: *kṣura*

axe: *paraśu*
barbed dart: *kunta*
battle-axe: *paraśvadha*
bludgeon: *musundī* (*v.l. musṛṇṭhī*, *bhuśuṇḍi*, *bhṛśuṇḍi*)
bow: *cāpa*, *kārmuka*, *śarāsana*, *dhanuḥ*, etc.
broad sword, double-edged sword: *ṛṣṭi*
club: *yaṣṭi* / *yaṣṭī*
cudgel: *musala*
dart: *prāsa*
dart/missile/lance: *āśanī*
discus: *cakra*—small discus: *cakraḥ*; big discus: *cakram*
goad: *aṅkuśa*
hook: *aṅkuśa*
hundred slayers: *śataghnī*
iron club, beam, or battering ram: *parigha*
iron cudgels: *tomara*
javelin: *śakti*
lance: *śūla*
mace: *gadā*
mallet: *kūṭa*

nirghāta: perhaps a mechanical weapon that makes a noise like a thunderbolt
noose: *pāśa*
ploughshare: *hala*
scimitar: *khaḍga* [when used with *asi*]
short javelin: *bhiṇḍipāla* / *bhindipāla*
sling: *kṣepaṇi* / *kṣepaṇīya*
spear: *paṭṭiśa* / *paṭṭasa*
staves: *daṇḍayuddha*
sword: *asi*, *khaḍga*, *nistriṃśa*
trident: *triśūla*
vajra: (1) Indra's thunderbolt; (2) thunderbolt-like weapon
vṛkṣa: treelike weapon
war hammer: *mudgara*

Bibliography

***The Text and Translation of the* Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**

The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical Edition. (1960–1975). 7 vols. General editors, G. H. Bhatt and U. P. Shah. Baroda: Oriental Institute (VR).

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India. (1984–2019). 7 vols. Edited by Robert P. Goldman. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (PVR).

Bālakāṇḍa

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, vol. 1, *Bālakāṇḍa*. (1984). Edited and translated by Robert P. Goldman. Introduction by Robert P. Goldman. Annotation by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ayodhyākāṇḍa

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, vol. 2, *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*. (1986). Translated by Sheldon I. Pollock. Edited by Robert P. Goldman. Introduction and annotation by Sheldon I. Pollock. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Araṇyakāṇḍa

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, vol. 3, *Araṇyakāṇḍa*. (1991). Translated by Sheldon I. Pollock. Edited by Robert P. Goldman. Introduction and annotation by Sheldon I. Pollock. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, vol. 4, *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*. (1994). Translated by Rosalind Lefeber. Edited by Robert P. Goldman. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Sundarakāṇḍa

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, vol. 5, *Sundarakāṇḍa*. (1995). Edited and translated by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Yuddhakāṇḍa

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, vol. 6, *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. (2009). Translated by Robert P. Goldman, Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, and Barend van Nooten. Annotation by Robert P. Goldman, Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, and Barend van Nooten. Edited, with introduction, by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Uttarakāṇḍa

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, vol. 7, *Uttarakāṇḍa*. (2016). Edited and translated by Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Works Consulted

Bhatt, G. H., ed. (1960). Introduction to *The Bālakāṇḍa: The First Book of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: The National Epic of India*, pp. xiii–xxviii. Baroda: Oriental Institute.

Brockington, John L. (1984). *Righteous Rāma: The Evolution of an Epic*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Brown, W. Norman. (1940). "The Basis for the Hindu Act of Truth." *Review of Religions* 5: 36–45.

———. (1968). "The Metaphysics of the Truth Act (*satyakriyā*)." In *Mélanges de'Indianisme à la Mémoire de Louis Renou*, pp. 171–77. Paris: E. de Boccard.

———. (1972). "Duty as Truth in Ancient India." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 116.3: 252–68.

Dante Alighieri. (1966–1967). *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgataa Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*. 4 vols. Edited by Giorgio Petrocchi. Milan: Mondadori; reprint, Florence: Le Lettere, 1994.

Debroy, Bibek, trans. (2017). *The Valmiki Ramayana*. 3 vols. New Delhi: Penguin.

Fitzgerald, James L. (1998). "Some Storks and Eagles Eat Carrion: Herons and Ospreys Do Not: Kaṅkas and Kuraras (and Baḍas) in the *Mahābhārata*." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118(2): 257–61.

Gandhi, Mahatma. (1929). *Young India* (September 19): 305.

Goldman, Robert P. (1980). "*Rāmaḥ Sahalakṣmaṇaḥ*: Psychological and Literary Aspects of the Composite Hero of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 8: 149–89.

Goldman, Robert P., and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman. (2019). *Devavāṇīpraveśikā: An Introduction to the Sanskrit Language*. 4th ed. Berkeley: Institute for South Asia Studies.

Lord, Albert B. (2000). *The Singer of Tales*. 2nd ed. Edited by Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy. Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mahābhārata: Critical Edition. (1933–1970). 24 vols. With *Harivaṃśa* (1969–1971). Critically edited by V. S. Sukthankar et al. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

Sutherland, Sally J. (Sally J. Sutherland Goldman). (1989). "Sītā and Draupadī: Aggressive Behavior and Female Role-Models in the Sanskrit Epics." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109(1): 63–79.

Thapar, Romila. (2002). *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wuyastyk, Dominik. (2004). "Jambudvīpa: Apples or Plums?" In *Studies in the History of the Exact Sciences in Honor of David Pingree*. Edited by C. Burnett et al., pp. 287–301. Leiden: Brill.

Suggestions for Further Reading

As noted in the introduction, readers who are interested in pursuing particular issues in the history, translation, reception, and interpretation of Vālmīki's immortal work should consult our fully introduced and copiously annotated translation of the poem along with its bibliographies. In addition, for some general background to the epic and its relation to its later versions, and to the other great Sanskrit epic poem, the *Mahābhārata*, we recommend the following brief reading list.

Brockington, John L. (1984). Righteous Rāma: The Evolution of an Epic. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

———. (1998). *The Sanskrit Epics*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Goldman, Robert P., and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman. (2004). "The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa and the Rāmāyaṇa Tradition." In *Hindu World*, edited by Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby. New York: Routledge.

Goldman, Robert P., and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman. (2010). "The *Rāmāyaṇa*." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, edited by Knut A. Jacobsen et al., pp. 161–86. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV.

McGill, Forrest, ed. (2016). *The Rāma Epic: Hero, Heroine, Ally, Foe*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, Cheng-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture.

Pollock, Sheldon I. (1993). "Rāmāyaṇa and Political Imagination in India." *Journal of Asian Studies* 52(2): 261–97.

Raghavan, V., ed. (1989). *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia: Papers Presented at the International Seminar on the Ramayana Tradition in Asia, New Delhi, December 1975*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. Reprint.

Richman, Paula, ed. (1991). *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. (2000). *Questioning Ramayanas: A South Asian Tradition*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Index

abandonment: of child, 477, 732 (*see also* child(ren)); of Lañkā by *rākṣasas*, 731, 740, 744; of Sītā by Rāma, 6, 17–19, 794–98
abducted women: curse Rāvaṇa, 16, 29–30; grief of, 762–63
abduction: of daughters of serpents, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, men, *daityas*, and *dānavas* by Rāvaṇa, 5, 16, 762–63; of Kumbhīnasī by Madhu, 765; of Śacī by Anuhlāda, 396; of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, 12–15, 24, 30, 32, 52, 56, 320–27;—Brahmā witnesses, 324;—creatures seem to mourn, 325;—crow foretells, 351;—foreshadowing of, 30;—Jaṭāyus attempts to stop, 13, 321–23;—monkeys witness, 326–27;—as pivotal event of poem, 12;—prophecy of, by Niśākara, 422;—Rāvaṇa plots, 303–4; —recalled, 355–57; 413, 434, 482, 519–20, 787;—rumors arise about, 793;—Supārśva as witness to, 420;—by Virādha, 12, 32, 52, 265–267;—recalled, 460, 677; of Takṣaka's wife, by Rāvaṇa, 299; of wife of Sugrīva, 361; of women by Rāvaṇa, 16, 29, 30, 762–63
Abhijit: quarter facing, 423
abhijit (rite), 68
Abhīra: region to be searched by southern search party, 402
adharma. *See* unrighteousness
Ādhūrtarajasa: son of Kuśa (2), 84
adhyāyas (chapters): of *Mahābhārata*, 9n
Ādikavi, First Poet: Vālmīki as, 4
Ādikāvya, First Poem: *Rāmāyaṇa* as, 4
Aditi: gives birth to Dhātṛ, 230;—to gods, 97–98, 280, 744;—to Viṣṇu, 82; Indra son of, 71; Māruta son of, 785; Rāma as son of, 849; sister of Diti, 744; Vāyu (Māruta) son of, 785; wife of Kaśyapa, 280, 744
Āditya (sun god), 403, 780. *See also* Sūrya
āditya(*s*) (class of divinities): 280, 403, 455, 768, 770–71, 772, 842; sons of Aditi, accept Surā, 98
Aeneid, 3
Agastya (brahman), 166; ascetic power of, 277, 279; associated with southern quarter, 181, 276, 407, 707, 728; attends Rāma's *aśvamedha*, 841; austerities of, 823; birth of, from a pot, 804; curses Mārīca and Tātaka, 78; celestial ornament, accepts from Śveta;—gives to Rāma, 824;—made by Viśvakarman, 824;—Rāma accepts, 726; deeds of, recounted, 276–77; describes austerities of Rāvaṇa and his brothers, 742; directs Rāma to Pañcavaṭī, 279; encounter of, with Ilvala and Vātāpi, 275–76, 312; etymology of name of, 275; fasting of, 277; gives celestial jewel/ornament to Rāma, 824;—arrow and quivers of Indra to Rāma, 278; gods instruct Rāma to visit ashram of, 823; identifies Rāma as Viṣṇu, 740; makes south safe from *rākṣasas*, 276; monkeys see, on Mount Malaya, 401; places Mahendra on southern shore, 401; as pot–born sage, 729, 823, 824, 827, 829; praises Hanumān, 787; praises Sītā, 278–79; Rāma asks Sutīkṣṇa directions to ashram of, 274–75; —dwells in heart of, 824;—gives gifts to, 166;—receives divine weapons from, 278;—visits ashram of, with gods, 17, 18, 823–29;—visits ashram of, with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, 277–79; region of, 181; reminds Rāma that he killed Vālin, 782; role of, in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, 16–17, 19, 26, 29; tells

cautionary tales, 16–17;—of Daṇḍa, 826–28;—of Śveta, 824–26; tells history of celestial ornament/jewel, 824–26;—desolation of the Daṇḍaka Forest, 826–28;—Hanumān's childhood, 783–87;—*rākṣasas*, Rāvaṇa, and Rāvaṇa's kin, 16–17, 729–82; Sutīkṣṇa directs Rāma to ashram of, 275; tells genealogy of Kubera, 729–33; Viśvakarman builds palace for, 401; on women's nature, 279
Agastya's brother: ashram of, 52, 275–76
Agni (god of fire), 108, 114, 188, *passim*: Anala name of, 612; banner of, smoke, 188; as bearer or eater of oblations, 282, 514, 516, 564, 578, 708, 793; divine weapon or weapon-spell (*astra*) of, 80, 108, 606–7, 639, 653, 685, 751; does not harm Hanumān, 514;—Sītā, 516; dwells in Arjuna's firepit, 775; Ganges gives birth to child of, 732; gods worship Viṣṇu with, 854; as having golden seed, 775; Indrajit sacrifices to, 641; Indrajit worships, 773; as leader of gods, 817, 823, 832; as *purohita* of the gods, 89; role of, in Skanda's birth, 89–90, 559; and Śiva's semen, 88–89; Sītā enters, 708;—prays to, 513–14; as Vaiśvānara, 785; as witness, 356, 358, 359, 523, 793, 782;—of nonaggression pact of Arjuna-Rāvaṇa, 780;—of Rāvaṇa-Nivātakavacas alliance, 761;—of Sītā's ordeal by fire, 708, 710; words of, to Ganges, 89;—to Indra, 101 as wrathful, 767; Yama attended by, 757
agnihotra (rite), 28, 87, 104, 105, 119, 174, 189, 211, 229, 262, 268, 306, 567, 571, 741, 786, 853
agniparīkṣa. *See* ordeal by fire
agniṣṭoma (sacrifice), 567, 764, 845
agriculture: increases in Dvāpara Yuga, 821
Ahalyā: austerities of, 100; Brahmā creates, 774; etymology of name of, 774; Gautama curses, 101, 774; Indra rapes, 774; —seduces, 100–101; loses distinction as only beautiful woman, 774–75; story of, in *Bālakāṇḍa*, 100–102;—in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, 774–75
Aikṣvāka(s): Daśaratha, 121, 145, 167, 169, 171; Kurus, 36; Rāma, 77, 182, 184; Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 342
Airāvata (elephant), 290, 299; Hanumān mistakes, for fruit, 784; Indra seeks Hanumān on, 784; as mount of Indra, 290, 444, 517, 540, 635, 772; son of Irāvatī, 280; Sudarśana born in lineage of, 630; as world guardian, 280
Airāvata (mountain), 206
Aiṣīka (weapon-spell): of Atikāya, 639
ajas or *ājas* (class of ascetics), 302–3
Ajātaśatru (king of Magadha): defeats *janapada* of Kosala, 36
Akampana (*rākṣasa* troop leader) (1), Hanumān fights and kills, 596–98; killing of recalled, 715, 728; leads *rākṣasa* troops into battle, 596–97; minister of Rāvaṇa, 769; Rāvaṇa hears of death of, 599; son of Sumālin and Ketumatī, 734
Akampana (*rākṣasa* troop leader) (2), 603, 668
Akṣa (son of Rāvaṇa): Hanumān fights and kills, 53, 504–6; Rāvaṇa sends to fight Hanumān, 503
Alambuṣā (*gandharva* woman), 227–28
Alambuṣā (mother of Viśāla), 99
Alarka: gives his eyes to brahman, 145
alliance: of Rāma and Sugrīva, 13, 25, 356, 367; of Rāvaṇa and Nivātkavacas, 761
ally/allies: Bharata assembles, to aid Rāma, 787; of Bharata, 240; of Daśaratha, 74, 84; dismissal of, by Rāma, 17, 787–89; Guha as, of Kosalan court, 41; of House of Ikṣvāku, 226, 254; Jaṭāyus as, of Kosalan court, 24; Kabandha makes, known to Rāma, 344–45; Kumbhakarṇa devours, 626; Lakṣmaṇa as, of Rāma, 249; monkeys as Rāma's, 15, 70, 393, 495, 535; Pratardana as, of Rāma, 787; of Rāma, 19, 24, 488, 705, 707–8, 711, 713, 719; Rāma and Sugrīva as, 358, 367, 384, 392–93, 396, 483, 486, 488, 522–23, 590, 715; of Rāvaṇa, 31, 323, 488; Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa as

Rāma’s closest, 699; of Sugrīva, 384, 590; treatment of, 384–85; Vibhīṣaṇa as, of Rāma, 5, 15, 56, 551–52, 702; of Viśvāmitra, 104
alms: daughter as, 730
Amarāvatī (Indra’s heaven), 58–59, 437, 439, 575, 630, 650, 716, 731, 734, 746, 755, 780; Laṅkā compared to, 319
Ambarīṣa, 252; genealogy of, 122; sacrifice of, 113–14
ambush: of Vālin by Rāma, 13, 368
Aṃśumant (name for the sun), 349
Aṃśumant (son of Asamañja), 96; attains heaven, 94; genealogy of, 122, 252; searches for Sagara’s horse, 93–94; son of Asamañja, 91, 93; unable to bring Ganges to earth, 94
amulet: Kausalyā gives, to Rāma, 159; Vālmīki gives, to Lava and Kuśa, 813
Anala. *See* Agni
Anala (*rākṣasa*): minister of Vibhīṣaṇa, 573; son of Mālin, 734
Analā (1): one of Dakṣa’s sixty daughters, 280; brings forth fruit trees, 280
Analā (2): relates information to Sītā, 489; Vibhīṣaṇa’s eldest daughter, 489
Analā (3): as daughter of Mālyavān and Sundarī, 734; as granddaughter of Mālyavān, 765; mother of Kumbhinasī, 765, 808
Ananta (thousand-headed god), 399
Anaraṇya: father of Pṛthu 122, 252; Rāvaṇa fights and kills, 16, 755–56
Anasūyā (ascetic woman), 56; advises Sītā on wifely duties and devotions, 260; asceticism of, 259; audience of, with Sītā, 259–63; created roots and fruits and caused the Jāhnavī to flow, 259; description of, 259; gives gifts to Sītā, 261; reduced ten nights to one, 259; Sītā tells, about birth and marriage, 261–62; wife of Atri, 259
ancestor(s): of Bhagīratha, flooded with water, 96; Dilīpa unable to save, 94
Andhaka, (*asura*), 298, 581, 736
Andhra: region searched by southern search party, 400
Aṅgada (monkey, son of Vālin), 13, 26–27, *passim*; allows monkeys to drink honey-wine, 526; announces arrival of Lakṣmaṇa, 389; arrives in Kiṣkindhā, 397; attacks Rāvaṇa’s palace, 579; carries Lakṣmaṇa to Laṅkā, 541; claims Kumbhakarṇa is scarecrow, 621; consecration of, as crown prince, 380–81; considers Vibhīṣaṇa suspect, 550; death of Vālin and, 373–74, 377, 379; decides to fast to death, 416, 417; declares prowess in jumping, 424; despondency of, 416; duty of Tārā toward, 375; escapes capture, 579; exhorts monkeys, 410, 423–24, 621–22;—southern search party, 410; fights and kills Kampana, 647–48; Hanumān exhorts, to remain loyal, 415; —Mahāpārśva, 682–83;—Narāntaka, 632–33; fights Indrajit, 581, 583; grief of, 379, 389, 486; guards southern gate, 573–74, 577; Hanumān rebuffs, 415; —reports to, 518–19; humility of, 530; instructions of Tārā to, 376–77; Jāmbavān discourages, from jumping, 424–25; kills *asura*, 409–10; kingly qualities of, 415; as leader of southern search party, 27, 400, 407; as messenger of Rāma, 578–79; monkeys praise, 530; proposes killing Rāvaṇa and rescuing Sītā, 525; *rākṣasas* capture, 579; Rāma gives armlets to, 726; reports alliance between Rāma and Sugrīva, 367; reports Hanumān’s success, 525; and Saṃpāti converse, 417–18, 420–23; Saṃpāti tells, of meeting with Niśākara, 420–22; smashes pinnacle of Rāvaṇa’s palace, 579; son of Kaikeyī (Bharata) embraces, 722; strikes Dadhimukha, 528; struck down in battle, 643, 648; and Sugrīva converse, 414, 415–16; Tārā hears information from, 367; tells Saṃpāti of fight between Jaṭāyus and Rāvaṇa, 417–18;—story of Rāma, 417–18; terror of, at arrival of Lakṣmaṇa, 388–89; urges monkeys to fast to death, 414; and Vālin, 372, 376; vows to fast to death, 414, 416
Aṅgada (son of Lakṣmaṇa): consecration of, in Aṅgadīyā, 847
Aṅgadīyā (city): Rāma founds, 847
Aṅgārakā (shadow-catching *rākṣasa* woman), 401. *See also* Siṃhikā

Āṅgiras, 280, 846; Gārgya son of, 845; Nimi chooses, to perform sacrifice, 802
Āṅgirasas: curse Hanumān, 786
Anila (*rākṣasa*): son of Mālin, 734
Anila (wind god), 427, 455, 505; Hanumān son of, 453, 564, 606, 624, 634, 635, 650
animals: as *rākṣasa* mounts, 736, 765, 771; eating of five-clawed, 370; gods take on forms of, 754; of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 24–26
Añjanā: ability of, to take form at will, 425–26; an *apsaras* (Puñjikasthalā), 425; infatuation of Māruta with, 426; mother of Hanumāṇ, 426, 643, 783, 786; story of, 425–26; wife of Kesarin, 425, 783, 786
Añjana (guardian elephant [*diggaja*]), 60, 733, 776, 778
Añjana (mountain), 394
another birth. *See* birth(s): reaping consequences of previous; reincarnation
antelope skin. *See* black antelope(s): wearing of hide of
anuṣṭubh (type of meter), 8
apes (*ṛkṣas*), 189, 231–32, 243, *passim*; birth of, 70–71, 854; Dhūmra leader of, 397, 559, 580, 622; gods take form as, 70–71; Jāmbavān as king of, 27, 540, 573–74, 591, 661–62, 658, 668, 672, 682, 788; live in Ayodhyā, 788; not native to Indian subcontinent, 46–47; number of, 393, 580; and Rāma, 789, 792, 844, 845, 852, 853; Rāma gives gifts to, 788; return to birth places, 854–55; seek protection of Vālin, 377; Sugrīva as lord of, 384, 486; Tārā as protector of, 375, translation of *ṛkṣas* as, 46–47. *See also* langur(s); monkeys
apsaras(*es*), 96, 125, 127, *passim*; Bharadvāja invokes, to entertain Bharata, 227, 228; *dānavas* will not accept, 98; etymology of word, 98; Ghṛtācī (*see* Ghṛtācī); gods father sons on, 70; Hemā (*see* Hemā); Kumbhakarṇa devours seven, 743; Menakā (*see* Menakā); Pañcāpsaras lake of five, 274; produced from the churning of the ocean, 98; Puñjikasthalā, 425 (*see also* Añjanā); Rambhā (*see* Rambhā); Urvaśī (*see* Urvaśī)
aptoryāma rite, 68
Arajā (daughter of Uśanas): as Bhārgava girl, 827; Daṇḍa rapes, 827–28; Uśanas Kāvya curses, 878ā
Araṇyakāṇḍa, 9, 24, 32, 44, 264–350; synopsis of, 12–13
Āraṇyakaparvan, 36
Ariṣṭa (mountain): Hanumān's return leap from, 516–18
Ariṣṭanemin (sage), 837
Arjuna Kārtavīrya: blocks flow of Narmadā, 777; captures Rāvaṇa, 779; defeats ministers of Rāvaṇa,778; fells Prahasta in battle, 778; fights and defeats Rāvaṇa, 16, 26, 30, 777–78; as king of Haihayas, 775, 778, 780; ministers of, 775, 777–78; nonaggression pact of, with Rāvaṇa, 780, *purohitas* of (see *purohita*(*s*): of Arjuna Kārtavīrya); releases Rāvaṇa, 780; story of, 775–80
army. *See* monkey army; *rākṣasa* army; southern search party
arrow(s): Agastya gives, to Rāma, 278; Brahmā gives, to Indra, 278, 298; extended simile of, of Rāma, 628;—of Rāvaṇa, 605; —of Viṣṇu, 737; Indra gives, 298;—to Agastya, 278; of Indrajit fell monkeys, 642–43;—pierce Lakṣmaṇa and Rāma, 584–85, 654–55;—serpent sons of Kadrū become, 592; of Kāma (*see* Kāma: arrows of); Nīla extracts, from Vālin, 377; of Rāma (*see also* Rāma: arrow(s) of); Rāma splits seven *sāla* trees with, 53, 363–64; —recalled, 366, 393; of Śatrughna enters Rasātala, 817; shape-shifting of, 583, 592, 690;—of Rāma, 690, 853; of Viṣṇū, 127–28, 817;—Rāma gives to Śatrughna, 810
Arthasādhaka (minister of Daśaratha), 60
Aruṇa (bird): father of Saṃpāti, 281; Saṃpāti son of, 486; son of Vinatā, 280–81
Aruṇa (mountain), 394
Arundhatī: as exemplar of wifely obedience, 260; Sītā compared to, 279, 481; Sītā superior to, 701
Aryaman (name of an Āditya), 158

āryan civilization, 27–28
Aryan clans, 35
āryan conduct, 448, 452
Aryan culture, 28
Aryan kings, 133
Aryan society, 40
Āṣāḍha: month of, 383
Asamañja, 122; Aṃśumant son of, 91; drowns children in Sarayū, 91, 170; father of Aṃśumant, 93; genealogy of, 152, 252; Sagara dispossesses, 170, 252; son of Sagara and Keśinī, 91
Aśaniprabha: Dvivida fights and kills, 581–82
ascetic(s), 12, 54, 58, *passim*; abduction of Sītā witnessed by, 324; appeal to Rāma for protection, 12, 258; ashrams of, in Daṇḍaka wilderness, 264, 271, 274 (*see also* ashram(s)); austerities of (*see* austerities); Bharata as, 16, 23, 214; Bharata wears clothing of, 257–58, 718; brahmans as, 263, 821, 845, *passim*; Daśaratha shoots, 198–99; Durvāsas as, 799, 850; duty of, toward guests, 278; emerges from Nimi's body, 805; fasting of, 264, 302, 348; fear *rākṣasas*, 273; forest devoid of, 824; foretell Śabarī's meeting with Rāma, 348; Garuḍa rescues 302–3; Hanumān vows to become, 455; Kāla in guise of, 848; Kumbhakarṇa as, 742; Lavaṇa oppresses, 809; live near Ganges, 796;—in Janasthāna, 838; Mārīca as, 307; Mārīca harrasses, 306; who mistreats guests eats own flesh in next world, 278, 825–26; Niśākara as, 421–22; practices of, 268–69; protection of, as duty of kings, 264–65, 269 (*see also* duty: of king with advisors); *rākṣasas* kill, 269; Rāma and Sītā approached by, 264; Rāma as, 144, 152, 175, 209, 237, 258, 306, 466, 566;—gives donations to, 845;—protects, 269, 273;—wears clothing of, 170 (*see also* barkcloth garments); Rāma's vow to, accomplished, 298; Rāvaṇa as false, 314–17; Śambūka as, 822; seats fit for, 807; seek Rāma's protection, 12, 258, 264–65, 269, 273; 807–9; show hospitality to Rāma, 264–65; Sītā desires to visit, 791; Vasiṣṭha as, 799; Vibhiṣaṇa as, 742; visit Sutīkṣṇa, 269; in Yamunā region, 807. See also *ajas* or *ājas*
asceticism (*tapas*), 29, 41, 51, *passim*; of Anasūyā, 259; of Bhagīratha, 94; of Bharadvāja, 717; of Bharata, 214, 718; black antelope skin as mark of, 752, 764; destroyed by possessing weapons, 272; of Gautama, 101, 774; of Indrajit Meghanāda, 661, 764, 773; of Māṇḍakarṇi, 274; of Maya, 412, 746; of Merusāvarṇi, 403; of Niśākara, 421–22; practice of, and kshatriya class incongruous, 272; of Rāvaṇa, 29, 511, 742–43; of Śabarī, 347–48; of Śambūka, 18, 822; of Śarabhaṅga, 267; of Sītā, 516; of Śiva, 89; social class (*varṇa*) and *yuga* restrictions on, 821–22; of Sutīkṣṇa, 270; of Svayaṃprabhā, 413; of Vedavatī, 752–53; of Viśravas, 730–31; of Viśvāmitra, 41, 76; of women, 797; Vālmīki gains insight through, 797. *See also* austerities
ascetic power, 277, 279; ability to kill *rākṣasas* with, 273; of Gautama, 101; of Indra, 502; of Māṇḍakarṇi, 274; of sages at Pampā, 347; of Umā, 87–88
ascetic practice (*tapas*): being underwater as, 765, 823; decapitation as, 299, 742; of the five fires, 110, 115, 742; hanging upside down as, 822; heroic posture as, 742, living on air as, 730; living on water as, 730; raising arms as, 94, 115, 742, 836; sleeping upside down in water as, 365; standing without support as, 836; taking no sustenance as, 730–31; in water, 836
ascetic women: live near Vālmīki's ashram, 797. *See also* Anasūyā; Pārvatī; Śabarī; Svayaṃprabhā; Vedavatī
ashram(s), 104, 113, 258, *passim*; of Agastya, 17, 18, 275, 276, 277, 278, 823–24; of Agastya's brother, 275; of ascetic family, 199; of ascetics in Daṇḍaka wilderness, 264, 271, 274, *passim*; of Atri, 259–63, 716; of Bali, 81–82; of Bharadvāja, 188–89, 221, 225–30, 255, 716; of Budha, 836–37; of courtesans, 62; of Cyavana, 814; of Durvāsas, 850; of the great Dwarf (*vāmana*) (*see* ashram(s): of Bali *this entry*); of Gautama, 100–101, 774, 802; of Gokarṇa, 742; on Gomatī River, 795; of Kāma, 76–77; of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, 730–31, 748; of Mataṅga on Ṛśyamūka, 363, 408; of

Niśākara, 421; of Pulastya, 730; of Rāma, 52, 189–90, 230, 236, 242–43, 281, 279, 284, 287, 304, 309–10, 323–24, 720; of Śabarī, 348; sages and Rāma abandon, 258–59; of Śarabhañga, 267; of Śiva, 77; of Sutīkṣṇa, 270, 274; of the Saptajanas, 365–66; of Tṛṇabindu, 729–30; of Uśanas Kāvya, 827–28; of *vaikhānasa* ascetics in northern quarter, 405; of Vālmīki, 6, 9, 17, 18, 19, 38, 55, 794–98, 800;—Lava and Kuśa live in, 57; —Śatrughna hears recitation of *Rāmāyaṇa* in, 818–19;—Śatrughna visits, 18, 812–14;—Sītā abandoned at, 795–98, 842;—Sītā gives birth in, 813; of Vasiṣṭha, 104–5, 107–8, 110, 798–99; Vibhāṇḍaka, 62; of Viśvāmitra, 10, 13, 32, 40, 80, 82, 115, 305 (*see also* Ashram of The Perfected Being); women of, 797; Yayāti enters, 807
Ashram of the Perfected Being, 81–86, 100, 103; Rāma visits, 81–87
Aśmanagara (city): Rāvaṇa conquers, 761
Aśoka (minister of Daśaratha), 60, 204
aśoka(s) (tree[s]), 281, 310, 330, *passim*; Sītā clings to, 472–73, 482
aśoka grove: description of, of Rāvaṇa, 456–58; etymology of word, 334; Hanumān devastates, 498; —searches, 456–58; of Rāma, 725, 790–91; resembles young woman, 456
astrologers: 65, 135; foretell Sītā's future, 588
asura(*s*), 68, 75, 60, *passim*; Añgada kills, 409–10; as buffalo (*see* Dundubhi); Jayā bore fifty sons called Saṃhāras to destroy, 75; weapon-spells of, 685; etymology of word, 98; inhabit Pātāla, 432
aśvamedha (horse sacrifice), 18, 35, 356, 833; Agastya at Rāma's, 841; dear to Śiva, 837; of Daśaratha, 61, 64–71, 238, 356;—Kausalyā's role in, 67; feeding of brahmans during, 66–67, 838; gods perform, for Indra, 832–33; of Ila, 837; Lakṣmaṇa tells Rāma to perform, 833; Maheśvara tells Rāma to perform, 711; performed by Marutta, 837;—for obtaining sons, 61; purifies sin of *brahmahatyā*, 830–33; of Rāma, 18–19, 711, 726, 799, 837–45; of Sagara, 91–92
Aśvapati, 207; Bharata and Śatrughna live with, 130
Aśvapati (father of Kaikeyī). *See* Kaikeyī: daughter of Aśvapati
Aśvapati (maternal uncle of Bharata), 130, 206, 845
Aśvapati (Yudhājit): king of Kekaya, 206
Aśvins, 75, 100, 103, *passim*; Dvivida and Mainda sons of, 397, 525, 564
Atibalā (*mantra*): Viśvāmitra gives to Rāma, 76
Atikāya (*rākṣasa*), 547, 603, 628, *passim*; Aiṣīka divine weapon of, 639; army of slaughtered, 635; battles monkey army, 637; Brahmā grants boons to, 635–36; challenges Rāma, 637; chariot of, 630, 636–38; compared to Viṣṇu, 635; description of, 636–37; joins battle, 637; eager for battle, 629–30; Kumbhakarṇa paternal uncle of, 628; Lakṣmaṇa fights and kills, 637–40;—recalled, 715; leads *rākṣasas* into battle, 629–30; Rāma questions Vibhīṣaṇa about, 736; son of Rāvaṇa, 630; terrifies monkey army with sound of bow, 635
atirātra (sacrifice), 67, 68, 645, 845
Atri, ashram of, 259–63, 716; Durvāsas son of, 798; Nimi asks, to perform sacrifice, 802; one of the seven great seers, 728
auspicious glow, 791; as sign of life (vital glow), 586, 589, 824; as sign of pregnancy, 791
auspicious omen(s): clockwise direction as, 641, 653; Hanumān observes, 515; presage victory for Rāma, 478, 540–41; Sītā observes, 478, 481; Trijaṭā observes in dream, 376. *See also* inauspicious omens; omen(s)
auspicious signs: of abducted women, 764; all were endowed with, 727; bindi as, 282, 325; children of Krodhavaśā bear, 280; of Kuśa and Lava, 57; Lakṣmaṇa, one of, 179, 184, 332, 344, 383, 386, 395, 485. 553, 655, 660, 662, 665, 671, 688, 792, 809, 822; of Prajāpati's servant, 69; Rāma marked with, 51, 485–86;—observes, 693; of sacrifical horse, 837–38; Sītā marked with, 588; of royal elephant, 160
austerities, 10, 18, 69, *passim*; absence of, when dead as source of regret, 750; of ascetics, 268–69; of Bhagīratha, 94; of Bharata, 283; of Budha, 835, 836; of Daśaratha, 339; of Diti, 98–99; eating once

a month as, 94; of five fires, 94; of Gautama and Ahalyā, 100; javelin of Maya gained through, 746; of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, 730–31; of Kumbhakarṇa, 742; of Kuśanābha's daughters, 85; of Mālin, Mālyavān, and Sumālin, 733; performed underwater, 765, 823; as permissible for various social classes, 821–22; of Rāvaṇa 742–43; raising arms as, 94, 115, 742, 836; of Śambūka, 822; of Śarabhaṅga, 268; of Śiva and Umā, 87–88; of Suketu, 78; of Sutīkṣṇa, 270; of Śveta, 825–26; of Tṛṇabindu, 729; of Vaiśravaṇa related to Rāvaṇa, 748; of Vālmīki, 797, 842; of Vedavatī, 752–53; of Vibhiṣaṇa 742; of Viśvāmitra, 107–17; of Vṛtra, 831; women engaged in, 797. *See also* asceticism; ascetic practice

auto-decapitation: Brahmā stops Rāvaṇa's, 299, 742–43

autumn, 381, 382, 384. *passim*; commencement of, 385, 389; description of, 386

āvartini spell: Budha recites, 835

avatāra (incarnation): theory of, 4–5, 5n, 21, 38

avatāra (incarnation) of Viṣṇu: Buddha as, 21; to kill Rāvaṇa, 10; Kṛṣṇa as, 35, 40; Narasiṃha (Man-Lion) as, 30; Rāma as, 4, 5n, 9, 11, 35, 40; Rāma Jāmadagnya (Paraśurāma) as, 21; sons of Daśaratha as, 4

avis ex machina, Garuḍa as, 24

Ayodhyā, 10, 36, 58–60, 128, 137–38, 206–7, 256–57; grief of, 174–75, 185, 191–92, 194

Ayodhyākāṇḍa, 130–263; synopsis of, 9, 11–12

Babhru (*gandharva* lord), 402

Bahli/Bahlika, 204; horses of, 60; kingdom of, ruled by Ila, 833–37; western search party sent to, 402, 404

Bahlikas, 833

bahusuvarṇaka (sacrifice): of Indrajit, 764

Balā (*mantra*): Viśvāmitra gives to Rāma, 75

Bālakāṇḍa, 51–129; synopsis of, 9–11

bali (offerings): dogs eating, as inauspicious omen, 571

Bali Vairocana (*asura*), 145, 335, 640, 649; and Indra, 768, 772, 779; Jāmbavān at sacrifice of, 424; Rāma as Viṣṇu at sacrifice of, 710; story of, 81–82; and Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa), 779

bandins (panegyrists), 35

banishment. *See* abandonment; exile

bards (*sūtas*), 137, 148, 159, *passim*; Lava and Kuśa as, 6, 10, 17–19, 840–42, 844, 851–52

barkcloth garments, 162, 198, 233, 262, 264, 270, 274, 276, 333, 348, 786; of Bharata, 224, 244, 258, 718, 722, 809; of Kuśa, 840; of Lakṣmaṇa, 186, 222, 265, 286, 353–54, 482, 485; of Lava, 840; of Mārīca, 303; of Rāma, 11, 144, 150, 155, 170, 182, 186, 208, 209, 222, 237, 242, 245, 265, 286, 301, 307, 322, 353–54, 466, 485, 566, 717, 719, 809; of Sītā, 170–71; of Svayaṃprabhā, 412; of Vālmīki, 54

battle-standard(s), 234, 256, 289, *passim*; of Akampana marked with king of beasts, 603; of Bharata marked with *kovidāra* tree, 220, 235; of Indrajit described, 664; of Kumbha marked with king of serpents, 604; of Rāvaṇa marked with human head, 685;—Nīla perches on tip of, 606–7; of Prahasta, serpent, 600

bear: Jāmbavān as, 27

beheading: of charioteer of Indrajit, 669;—of Sumālin, 738; gods plead with Viṣṇu for, of *rākṣasas*, 118, 735; of Indrajit, 670–71; Indrajit threatens, of Lakṣmaṇa, 665; of Kumbhakarṇa, 31, 628; of Mahākapāla, 293; of Mahodara, 682; of Mālin, 739; of monkeys, 643, 679; of Nikumbha, 582; of Prahasta by means of shattering, 602; of *rākṣasas*, 293, 739; Rāma threatens, of Rāvaṇa, 692; of Rāvaṇa, 697, 742–43; Rāvaṇa falsely tells Sītā of, of Rāma, 565; of Śambūka by Rāma 822–23; of Triśiras, 295, 635; of Vṛtra (comparison), 628. *See also* auto-decapitation

Bhadra (companion of Rāma): tells Rāma of rumors of Sītā, 791–92
Bhadra (one of the elephants who support the earth), 93
Bhaga (god of marriage), 123, 734
Bhaga (name of an Āditya/planet), 158, 278, 736
Bhagavadgīta, 15, 35, 38; relationship of, to *Mahābhārata*, 15, 35; as Vaiṣṇava work, 35
Bhagīratha: ancestors of, flooded with water, 96, austerities of, 94; Brahmā grants boon to, 95; genealogy of, 122, 252; offers funeral libations to sons of Sagara, 97
Bhāgīrathī. *See* Ganges
Bharadvāja (disciple): of Vālmīki, 54–55
Bharadvāja (sage): 237; ashram of, 188–89, 221, 225–30, 255, 716; audience of, with Rāma, 52, 56, 188–90, 716–17; Bharata and entourage visit, 225–31, 255–56; Devavarṇinī, daughter of, 730; directs Rāma to Citrakūṭa, 189–90; gives daughter as wife to Viśravas, 730; as one of the seven seers, 728; as seer, 841
Bhārata: "Tale of the Bhāratas," 36
Bharata (son of Daśaratha), 10. 11, 52, *passim*; accompanies Rāma on final journey, 853; advises Rāma not to perform *rājasūya*, 830; agrees to serve as regent, 12; anger of Lakṣmaṇa toward, 266; army of, battles *gandharvas*, 846–47; arrives at Ayodhyā, 207; as Rāma's co-*avatāra*, 4, 22; assembles allies to aid Rāma, 787; Aśvapati as maternal uncle of, 130, 206, 845; austerities of, 11, 23, 224, 258, 283, 718, 722, 809; Ayodhyā entrusted to, 822; Bharadvāja hosts, with army, 226–29; birth of, 71; character synopsis of, 23; childhood of, 72; consecration of, 316–17; crosses Ganges, 224–25; curses himself, 211–12; decides to enter Daṇḍaka, 249; departs for Citrakūṭa, 229–31; describes Rāma's ideal kingdom, 790; dream of, 204–5; encamps at Ganges, 220–25;— on Citrakūta 234–36; fondness of, for Śatrughnā, 10, 22–23, 72; founds Puṣkarāvatī and Takṣaśīla, 846–87; fraternal devotion of, 23; goes to forest, 12, 219–36; grief of, 208–11, 212–14, 217–18, 221, 257, 713; hears recitation of *Rāmāyaṇa* 58, 840;—story of Ila/Ilā, 833–37; illusory deer would be source of wonder for, 311; implored to rule Ayodhyā, 248–49; informs Rāma of Daśaratha's death, 241, 339; inner apartments of, 853; Kaikeyī, mother of, 71, *passim*; Kausalyā reviles, 211; laments Rāma and mourns Daśaratha, 213–14; learns of Daśaratha's death, 207–8, 209;—of Rāma's exile 208–9; leaves Ayodhyā for Nandigrāma, 257–58; Māṇḍavī wife of, 125; marriage of, 123–25; meeting of, with Rāma, 236–55; meets Rāma on Citrakūṭa, 52, 56, 236–55; orders building of road, 216–17; performs funeral rites for Daśaratha, 212–13; places Rāma's sandals on elephant's head, 255;—on head, 255;—in position of honor, 718;— on throne, 12, 23, 52, 56, 718, 722;— on Rāma's feet, 722–23; and Pratardana, 787; prepares for *aśvamedha*, 838, proposes consecration of Lava and Kuśa, 851; *purohitas* of (see *purohita*(*s*), of Bharata not named); Puṣkara and Takṣa sons of, 846; Rāma asks Bhadra about, 791; —consecrates, as prince regent, 726; —decides to consecrate, 851;—informs, of intention to abandon Sītā, 792–94; Rāma's return to Ayodhyā reported to, 829; reaches Citrakūṭa 231; readies army to fetch Rāma, 218–19; recalled fondly by Lakṣmaṇa and Rāma, 283, receives message, 205–6; rejects kingship, 12, 215–16, 218, 851; as Rāma's co-*avatāra*, 4, 22; returns to Ayodhyā, 256–57, 788, 847; reviles Kaikeyī, 209–11; righteousness of, 370–71; reunion of, with Rāma, 722–23; seers tell to agree to Rāma's request, 254; Sītā's suspicion toward, 314, 333; story of Indra and Vṛtra told to, 830–31; summoned back to Ayodhyā, 12; takes Rāma's sandals, 52, 56, 255; threatens to fast against Rāma, 253; tells Rāma of victory over *gandharvas*, 847; urges Rāma to be consecrated, 244–45, 247–48; Vasiṣṭha urges, to undergo consecration, 218; visits Bharadvāja's ashram, 225–31;—maternal uncle's, 11, 130; wants to kill Lavaṇa, 809; wedding of, 125; wives of, 853; Yudhājit as maternal uncle of, 124, 845–46;—takes, to his home, 130
Bharata (son of Dhruvasandhi), 122, 252
Bhāratas: vedic clan associated with the *Mahābhārata*, 35–36

Bharatas, northern quarter location of country of, 404
Bhārgava: Arajā as daughter of, 827; Cyavana as, 807–8, 814, 841; Devayānī as daughter of, 805–6; Uśanas Kāvya as, 541, 805–6, 827–28; Vālmīki as, 840. *See also* Bhṛgu
Bhāsakarṇa (Rāvaṇa's field marshal): Hanumān fights and kills, 503
Bhaṭṭikāvya (*Rāvaṇavadha*), 41
Bhava. *See* Śiva
Bhayā (sister of Kāla): Heti marries, 732
Bhikṣu (*gandharva* lord), 402
Bhogavatī (city of serpents), 237, 299, 401, 437, 439, 760
Bhṛgu: Cyavana son of, 837; grants Sagara a boon, 90; lineage of, 786; makes Nimi's consciousness return to his body, 804–5; Nimi chooses, to perform sacrifice, 802; Viṣṇu kills wife of, 79. *See also* Bhārgava
Bhṛgus: curse Hanumān, 786; Cyavana delight of, 814
Bhūti (goddess of prosperity), 315
Bible, 3
Big Bang theory, 37
Big Crunch theory, 37
bīja (heart), *Sundarakāṇḍa* as, of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 15
binary, characters of *Rāmāyaṇa* constructed as, 20
birth(s): attendants during, 813; of Agastya from a pot, 804; of apes, 70–71, 854; of Asamañja, 91; of birds, 280; of *daityas*, 280, 744; of Dundubhi and Māyavin, 746; expiation of misdeeds in former, 329; of gods, 280, 744; of Hanumān, 425–26, 783; of Indrajit (Meghanāda), 747; of Janaka from Nimi's body, 805; of Kaikasī's sons, 741; of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, 730; of Kumbhakarṇa, 28–29, 741; of langurs, 70–71; of Lava and Kuśa, 17, 813; of Mālin, Mālyavān, and Sumālin, 733; of Māruts, 99; of monkeys, 70–71, 854; of Nimi, 804; of Pūru from Śarmiṣṭhā, 805; of Purūravas from Ilā, 836; of *rākṣasas*, 731–32; of Rāma and brothers, 69–71, 844; of Rāvaṇa, 28–29, 741; reaping consequences of previous, 171, 188, 473, 753, 763, 802, 820; rites of, 813; of Śambūka as *śūdra*, 822; of Saramā, 747; of Sītā from a furrow, 21, 118, 261, 461, 753–54, 843; of sixty thousand sons to Sagara, 91; of sons as sign of perfect kingdom, 790; of Sukeśa, 732–33; of Śūrpaṇakhā, 28–29, 741; of Vasiṣṭha from a pot, 804; of Vasiṣṭha from semen of Mitra and Varuṇa, 803; of Vedavatī, 753; of Vibhīṣaṇa, 28–29, 741; of Vidyutkeśa, 732; of Viśravas, 730; of Yadu from Devayānī, 805; of Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa) to slaughter *rākṣasas*, 740. *See also* reincarnation
birthday of Vālmīki: restricted holiday, 5
black antelope(s): wearing of hide of, 239, 286, 301, 303, 307, 382, 412, 718, 722, 752, 764
bodhisattva, Rāma as, 5n
bodily signs, of Rāma, 484–85; of Sītā of, 587–88
body, preservation of, in vat of oil, 202, 822
books (*kāṇḍas*), of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 9
boon(s), 32, 107, 133, *passim*; Bharadvāja grants, to Rāma, 717; Bhṛgu grants, to Sagara, 90; Brahmā grants, to Bhagīratha, 95;—, to Hanumān, 426, 508, 786;—to Indrajit, 583, 773–74;—to Dvivida and Mainda, 525;—to Kabandha, 344;—to Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, 731;—to Kumbhakarṇa, 743–44;—to Mālin, Mālyavān, and Sumālin, 733, 735–36;—to Maya, 412;—to Rāvaṇa, 10, 24, 68–69, 74, 327, 742–43, 760;—to Śarabhañga, 268;—to Vibhīṣaṇa, 743;—to Virādha, 266; Cyavana grants, to son of Kālindī, 252; Daśaratha grants, to Kaikeyī, 11, 23, 141, 144; Dharma grants, to crow, 755; gods grant, to animals, 754–55; —to Hanumān, 785–86;—to Nimi, 805;—to Rāma, 53, 721, 823; —to Śatrughna, 817; granted to Dundubhi, 362;—the Nivātakavacas, 760; Hema grants, to Svyaṃprabhū, 412; Indra grants, to Hanumān, 426, 785–86;—to peacock, 754–55;—to Rāma, 712–13, 722; of Kaikeyī, 316, 417; Kubera grants, to Hanumān, 786;—to lizard, 755; Niśākara

grants, to Saṃpāti, 421; Rāma grants, to ascetics, 269; of Rāvaṇa, 742–43, 745, 768, 772; Śiva grants, to Hanumān, 786;—to Indrajit, 764;—to Madhu, 808–9, 811;—to Sukeśa, 733;—to Viśvāmitra, 107; Sūrya grants, to Hanumān, 786;—to Mount Sumeru, 783; Umā grants half of, to Ila, 834;—to *rākṣasa* women, 733; Varuṇa grants, to *haṃsa*, 755;—to Hanumān, 786; Vasiṣṭha grants, to Mitrasaha, 813 (*see also* Mitrasaha Saudāsa); Viśvakarman grants, to Hanumāṇ, 786;—to Nala, 554; Yama grants, to Hanumān, 786

bow(s), 223, 229, 234, *passim*; Agastya gives, to Rāma, 278; of Indrajit, 507, 764; of Janaka, 83, 117–19; of Mālin, 738; of Śiva, 11, 117–19, 127; of Viṣṇu, 126–28, 278, 295–96. *See also* horn bow; kshatriya(s): bow of, compared to kindling

Brahmā (Prajāpati), 68, 72, 76, *passim*; ashrams of Daṇḍaka resemble abode of, 264; asks Indra to recall his evil deed, 774; asks Rāma to return to essential Vaiṣṇava form, 854;—to return to heaven, 849, 854; as boar, 251; boons of unfalsifiable, 760; calls Rāma "Viṣṇu," 849; calms fears of divinities, 816–17;—of Rāma, 844; creates Ahalyā, 774;—all people as identical, 774;—earth with sons, 251; —Lake Mānasa, 77;—*rākṣasas* and *yakṣas*, 732;—rod of Kāla, 760;—the waters, 732; "Creator" as part of Trimūrti, 34–35; denies immortality to Indrajit, 773;—to Rāvaṇa, 743; weapons and weapon-spell of, 482, 493, 507–8, 523, 639, 641–42, 654, 655, 661; explains Śveta's hunger, 825–26; father of Kuśa (2), 84;—of Pulastya, 729, 780; foretells deeds of Hanumān, 786; as four-faced god, 55, 733, 785–86; gives Ahalyā to Gautama, 774; —his arrow and quivers to Indra, 278; —Maya's wealth to Hemā, 412;—Puṣpaka to Kubera, 731;—Rāvaṇi epithet "Indrajit," 773; gods approach, for refuge, 68, 784–85; gods and, propitiate Vāyu, 785; as granter of boons, 107, 133, 148, 171, 268, 270, 279, 733, 776, 786, 834; grants boon(s) to Bhagīratha, 95;—to Dvivida and Mainda, 525;—to gods, 678–79;— to Hanumān, 426, 508, 786;—to Hemā, 412;—to Indrajit, 583, 773–74;—to Kubera, 731;—to Kumbhakarṇa, 743–44;—to Mālin, Mālyavān, and Sumālin, 733, 735–36;—to Maya, 412;—to Rāvaṇa, 10, 24, 68–69, 74, 327, 742–43, 760;—to Suketu, 78;—to Vibhīṣaṇa, 743;—to Virādha, 266; grants brahmanhood to Viśvāmitra, 116–17;—daughter to Suketu, 78; —heavens to Rāma's followers, 854–55; —long life to Kabandha, 344;—poetic inspiration to Vālmīki, 9, 55; instructs Vālmīki to compose *Rāmāyaṇa*, 55; Kāla as messenger of, 848–49; makes Kubera world guardian, 731; ordains Vasiṣṭha's birth from semen of Mitra and Varuṇa, 803; orders gods to incarnate, 70–71; pronounces Viśvāmitra a brahman-seer, 116–17;—great seer; 115;—royal seer, 109;—seer, 114–15; proposes alliance between Rāvaṇa and Nivātakavacas, 760–61; protects Rāvaṇa from Yama's rod, 760; provokes quarrel between Śiva and Viṣṇu, 127; Rāma submits to weapon-spells of, 642; reminds Rāma of his incarnation as Viṣṇu, 844;—of true nature, 849; restores Rāvaṇa's heads, 743; revives Hanumān, 785; sires lineage of Ikṣvāku, 121, 251; stops Rāvaṇa's auto-decapitation, 299, 742–4; tells gods to give boons to Hanumān, 785;—Rāma to listen to *Rāmāyaṇa*, 844;—Rāvaṇa to release Indra, 773;—Sarasvatī to become Kumbhakarṇa's speech, 31, 743–44;— Śveta he must eat his own corpse, 825–26; —Vālmīki to compose *Rāmāyaṇa*, 9, 55; —Vasiṣṭha to enter semen of Mitra and Varuṇa, 803;—Yama not to strike Rāvaṇa with rod, 760; tricks Kumbhakarṇa under pretext of boon, 743–44; Vasiṣṭha as son of, 802–3; Vasiṣṭha requests a new body from, 803; Vāyu worships, 785; visits Vālmīki, 9, 55; witnesses abduction of Sītā, 324; world of (*see* Brahmaloka). *See also* Prajāpatis

Brahmadatta: husband of Kuśanābha's daughters, 86; son of Somadā, 85–86

Brahmahatyā (personification): demands residence outside of Indra, 832–33; dwells in four places, 833

brahmahatyā (slaying of a brahman), 77, 154, 276, 370, 391; Indra suffers sin of, 832; sin of, purified by *aśvamedha*, 830

Brahmaloka (world of Brahmā), 99, 104, 247, 406, 622, 733; Ila attains, 837; Manu attains, 826; next to Santāna, 854; Rāma will go to, 54, 799; Śarabhaṅga ascends to, 268; Śveta attains, 825; Viśvāmitra attains, 109

brahman(s), 57, 59, 61, *passim*; Agastya as foremost of, 775; born from the mouth of Manu, 280; Brahmahatyā possesses killers of, 833; cautionary tales about, 800–7; child of, restored to life, 18, 823; churn corpse of Nimi, 805; cows and, 78–79, 290, 709; curse Hanumān, 783, 786–87; —Nṛga, 801; death of son of, 18, 820–21; eating of five-clawed animals by, 370; feeding of, during *aśvamedha*, 66–67, 838; Ilvala as, 275; Ilvala and Vātāpi kill, 275–76; in list of social classes, 40, 65, 219, 240, 280, 821, 842; live on Yamunā's banks, 807–8; meat offered to, 812; Nalakūbara as, 767; Nimi's body preserved by, 804; Nṛga gives cows to, 800;—ignores, 801; power of, greater than kshatriyas, 106, 108–9; propitiate Śiva, 837; *rākṣasas* slaughter, 269; Rāma gives wealth to, 11, 165–66; Rāvaṇa as, 314–17; role of, in the *yugas*, 821; Śabalā (cow) of, 800–801; Samaga as type of, 383; and story of Nṛga, 800–802; summoned to *aśvamedha*, 838. *See also* ascetic(s)
brahman-killing. See *brahmahatyā*
brahman *rākṣasas*, 64, 463
braid. *See* Sītā: braid of
breaking of jaw (*hanu*). *See* Hanumān: jaw of, broken
Bṛhaspati, 137, 158, 159, 244, 484, 550, 780, 845; Kuśadhvaja son of, 752; as lord of speech, 481, 483; as *purohita* of gods, 339; as *purohita* of Indra, 723; restores gods to life, 591–92; Saṃvarta son of, 754; wisdom of, 131, 388, 415, 752–53
bribery, 438, 616, 636, 660, 744; and conciliation, as means of cooperation, 394
bride price: of Sītā, 118, 120, 123
bridge to Laṅkā, 538–39, 572, 590; monkeys and Nala construct, 15, 27, 53, 56, 554–55, 716–18, 721; monkeys cross, 555, 721; Rāma constructs, 703; Rāvaṇa asks about, 556
Buddha: as *avatāra* (incarnation) of Viṣṇu, 21; as offshoot of Ikṣvākus, 36
Buddhism, 5n, 34, 36–7, 39
Buddhist canon, 35
Budha: and story of Ila/Ilā, 834–37
buffalo *asura*. *See* Dundubhi
burrow(s). *See* cave; Nṛga: burrows of

Cakravān, Mount: Viṣṇu kills Pañcajana on, 403
Cakravartin (Universal Emperor), 35
caṇḍāla (outcaste): Triśaṅku becomes, 41, 110
Candra (moon god), 36, 640, 735; enemy of Rāhu, 256
Candra (mountain in ocean of milk), 592
Candrakāntā (city): founded in Malla by Rāma, 847
Candraketu (son of Lakṣmaṇa): consecration of, in Candrakāntā of, 847
Candravaṃśa (Lunar Dynasty). *See* Lunar Dynasty
cannibalism (eating of human flesh), 812–13; of Kumbhakarṇa, 743; of Lavaṇa, 814; of Rāvaṇa, 29, 754; of ministers of Rāvaṇa, 778. *See also* eating: of own corpse; flesh; flesh-eating
captivity: of Indra, 772–74; of Rāvaṇa, 779–80. *See also* Sītā: captivity of
carriage(s): 175, 213 219, *passim*; Daśartaha orders Sumantra to convey Rāṃa, 171; Lakṣmaṇa takes Sītā to forest in, 794; people of Ayodhyā follow Rāma's, 177; Rāma orders Lakṣmaṇa to take Sītā to forest in, 794–96; Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa go to forest in, 173–74, 178–80; —abandon carriage, 184. *See also* chariot(s)
cautionary tales, 17, 18, 24, 41, 800–807
cave (cavern), 147, 210, 237, *passim*; as dwelling of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 380–81; Hanumān born in, 426; Kabandha directs Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to, 347; Kiṣkindhā as, 53, 378–79, 381, 385, 390; of Kumbhakarṇa, 610; of Maya, 412, 414, 418; —southern search party in, 411–14, 418; of Nṛga

(*see* Nṛga: burrows of), of Ṛkṣa, 56; of Saṃpāti, 416, 422; Sītā takes recourse in, 291; Svayaṃprabhā rescues southern search party from, 413; Vālin battles Mayāvin in, 360–61, 408
cavern. *See* cave
chapter (*adhyāya*): of *Mahābhārata*, 9n
chapter(s) (*sarga*[*s*]): of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 9,10, 45
character synopsis: of animals, 24–25; of Bharata, 23; of Daśaratha, 23; of Hanumān, 26–27; of Indrajit, 31–32; of Kaikeyī, 24; of Kausalyā, 23–24; of Kumbhakarṇa, 31; of Lakṣmaṇa, 22; of lesser monkeys, 27; of major characters, 20; of minor *rākṣasas*, 32; of Rāma, 20–21; of *rākṣasas*, 27–28; of *rākṣasa* women, 32–34; of Rāvaṇa, 28–30; of Śatrughna, 23; Sītā, 21–22; of Sugrīva, 25; of Vālin, 25–26; of Vibhīṣaṇa, 30–31
chariot(s): of Atikāya, 636–38; battle of Rāvaṇa with Rāma, 689–98, 695–98; chariot of, fashioned through power of illusion, 320; of Brahmā, 733; of Dhūmrākṣa yoked with donkeys, 594; flying, 854–55; of Indra, 267–68, 770, 772; of Indrajit Rāvaṇi, 507, 655, 764, 772;—destroyed by Aṅgada, 581; 772; of Khara, 289; of Rāvaṇa, 302, 320, 693–94, 748, 765, 771–72; Śiva gives, to Indrajit, 764; of sons and grandsons of Varuṇa, 761; steered by owners' will, 761, 764; of Sumālin, 769; Sūrya as, of Rāhu, 784; of Yama, 758–60. *See also* flying chariot(s); Puṣpa/Puṣpaka(vimāna)
child(ren): abandonment of, 477, 732; of brahman restored to life, 823; death of, 18, 820–21; killing of, 18;—by Asamañja,170; killing of unborn (*see* feticide); never predeceases parent, 18; unable to conceive, 88
childbirth. *See* birth(s)
childhood, of Hanumān, 16, 426, 561, 783–87; of sons of Daśaratha, 10
children, killing of, by Asamañja, 170
Christian colonist, 42
Christianity, 37, 39
churning of the ocean. *See* ocean: churning of
Cīnas: northern quarter location of country of, 404
cirajīvin (long–lived one): Hanumān as, 27, 853; Vībhīṣaṇa as, 31, 743, 853
Citrakūṭa, 52, 56, 226, 269, 270, 348, 492, 532, 714, 716, 719; Bharadvāja directs Rāma to, 189–90; Bharata and army encamp on, 234–36; Bharata departs for, 229–31;—meets with Rāma on, 236–55;—reaches, 231; crow incident takes place on, 533; description of, 232–33; Rāma establishes ashram on, 190–91
Citraratha, advisor and charioteer of Rāma, 166
co-*avatāras*, 22. See also *avatāra* (incarnation)
Cola, 400
comic figure: monkeys as, 24
commander: as wife of army, 425
composite bow. *See* horn bow
conch (*śaṅkha*), of Viṣṇu, 403, 735, 737, 738 739, 740
conciliation, 339, 369, 375, 394, 415, 438, 497, 616, 636, 660, 744; and bribery, as means of cooperation 394
conciliation, of Sugrīva by Lakṣmaṇa, 393
confrontation: of Rāma with Rāma Jāmadagnya, 11, 56, 126–28
consecration. *See* ritual consecration; royal consecration
construction of bridge. *See* bridge to Laṅkā
corpse(s), 269, 286, 341, *passim*; brahmans churn, of Nimi, 805; condemned to eat own, 278, 824–25; headless, as evil omen, 290, 594; of Jaṭāyus, 341; preservation of, of Nimi, 804; in vat of oil, 202, 822; Rāma kicks, of Dundubhi, 53; Śveta condemned to eat his own, 824–25. *See also* cannibalism; flesh-eating; preservation: of bodies of Nimi

cosmic cycles (*kalpas*), 4, 37. See also *yuga*(*s*)
cosmic destruction: Rāma threatens, 337–38. *See also* universal destruction
cosmic eras (*yugas*), 37–38; Dvāpara, 821; Kali, 821; Kṛta, 729, 753–54, 808, 821, 826, 843; Tretā, 753–54, 821, 824
cow(s): Ambarīṣa offers, in exchange for Śunaḥśepha, 113 ; Bharata gives, to brahmans, 213;—promises to give, to Hanumān, 719; and brahmans, 78–79, 290, 709; Daśaratha gives, to priests, 68, 356; exalted state of those who give a Sītāthousand, 200; as gift to brahmans, 68, 800; *gomedha*, sacrifice of, 764; Janaka gives, to daughters, 125; Kausalyā gives, to Rāma's friends, 150; Nṛga gives, to brahmans, 800; Rāma has Lakṣmaṇa give, to Suyajña, 166;—gives, to the learned, 54;—to brahmans, 124, 726;—to Trijaṭa Gārgya (*see* Trijaṭa Gārgya), 166; Rohiṇī bears, 280; Śabalā as, of brahman (Nṛga story), 800–801;—of Vasiṣṭha 105–7; Sītā vows to give, to brahmans, 186–87; Surabhi as, pours forth milk for ocean of milk, 761; Viśvāmitra offeres, in.excnhange for Śabalā, 105–6; wish-fulfilling, of Vasiṣṭha, 105–7. *See also* Śabalā; Surabhi (Surabhī)
creation, 37
cremation: of Jaṭāyus, 53, 342; of Kabandha, 345; of Rāvaṇa, 702; of Vālin, 378–79. *See* funerary rites
crow(s), 318, 723; Dharma (Yama) grants boon to, 755; foretells abduction of Sītā, 352; Yama (god of death) becomes, 754; second path in sky that of, 419
crow episode, Hanumān recounts, 532–34; Sītā recounts, 492–93, 496
cūḍāmaṇi. *See* hair ornament
Cūlin: grants son to Somadā, 85–86
curse(s): of abducted women on Rāvaṇa, 16, 29–30, 762–63; of Agastya on Mārīca, 78;—on Tātaka, 32–33, 78; of Anaraṇya on Rāvaṇa, 16, 756; of Bharata on those approving of Rāma's exile, 211–12; of blind sage on Daśaratha, 200–201; of Brahmā on Kumbhakarṇa, 614; of brahmans on Nṛga 801–2; on celestial beings to become *rākṣasas*, 32; Durvāsas threatens, on Lakṣmaṇa, 40, 849–50; exhaust powers of asceticism, 753; freedom from, through bathing in Ganges, 96; of Gautama on his Ahalyā and Indra, 101, 774; of Matañga on Vālin, 408; of Mitra on Urvaśī, 804; as motif of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 16, 32–33, 40; of Nalakūbara on Rāvaṇa, 16, 767–68; of Nandin/Nandīśvara on Rāvaṇa, 16, 24, 751–52; of Nimi on Vasiṣṭha, 803; of Pulastya, 729; of sages on Hanumān, 783, 786–87; of Sthūlaśiras on Kabandha, 344; Śūrpaṇakhā as victim of, 33; Tṛṇabindu recognizes Pulastya's, 730; of Umā on gods and earth, 88–89; of Uśanas Kāvya on Arajā, 828;—on Daṇḍa, 828;—on Yayāti, 806–7; of Vaiśravaṇa on Tumburu, 266–67; of Vālmīki on Niṣāda hunter, 9, 54; of Vasiṣṭha on Mitrasaha Saudāsa, 813;—on Nimi, 803; of Vasiṣṭha's sons on Triśañku, 110; Viśravas exempts Vibhīṣaṇa from, 29, 741–42; of Viśravas on his children, 28–29, 741;—on Kaikasī, 28–29, 741;—on Rāvaṇa, 16, 29, 750; of Viśvāmitra on his sons, 114;—on Mahodaya, 111; of—on Rambhā, 116; —on Vasiṣṭha's sons, 111
Cyavana: as Bhārgava, 807–8, 814, 841; ashram of, 814; asks Rāma for protection from Lavaṇa, 808–9; grants Kālindī boon of son, 252; leads delegation of brahmans, 807; as son of Bhṛgu, 837; tells story of Lavaṇa and Māndhātṛ, 814–15;—of Madhu, 808
cyclical time, 37. *See also* cosmic cycles; cosmic eras

Dadhimukha (monkey), 564, 642; Añgada attacks, 528; conciliates Añgada, 530; monkeys assault, 526–28; reports devastation of Madhuvana to Sugrīva, 528–29
daitya(*s*), 90, 96, 398, *passim*; Diti gives birth to, 280, 744; Indra as slayer of, 831; inhabit Rasātala, 760; Kaiṭabha and Madhu as, 817; Kālakeyas a clan of, 763; Maya as lord of, 746; monkeys similar to, 560; Nivātakavacas as class of, 760; Rāma kills, 322; Rāvaṇa abducts daughters of, 762–63;—invulnerable against, 612, 743;—kills, 761, 763;—takes delight in harming, 574; Śambhu as king of, 753; Śarmiṣṭhā as, 805; Viṣṇu kills, 490; worship Viṣṇu, 854

dānava(s), 69, 74, 92, *passim*; Atikāya defeats, 636–37; battle between gods and, 591–92, 652, 670, 761, 768; Brahmā grants Rāvaṇa boon of invulnerability to, 742–43; Dundubhi as, 408; fear Rāvaṇa, 509; Hayagrīva as, 403; Kabandha as, 344; —foremost among, 343; live in ocean, 437; live in Pātāla, 423, 554, 577, 697; Maya as, 405, 412, 545; monkeys similar to, 560, 398;—Naraka as, 403; pose no threat to Rāvaṇa, 612; Rāma kills, 322, 551; Rāvaṇa abducts daughters of, 762–63;—as enemy of, 609, 629, 649; —invulnerable against, 69, 422, 605, 677, 700, 743;—takes delight in harming, 574; Timidhvaja's son as king of, 177; Vālin slayer of, 373; Vidyujjihva as, 29, 33, 746; wander three worlds, 677–78; will not accept *apsarases*, 98; worship Viṣṇu, 854

daṇḍa (punishment). *See* punishment

Daṇḍa (*rākṣasa*): son of Sumālin, 734

Daṇḍa (son of Ikṣvāku): Agastya tells story of, 826–28; cursed by Uśanas Kāvya, 828; as a dullard, 827; etymology of name of, 827; kingdom of, becomes Daṇḍaka forest, 828; *purohita* of (see *purohita*(s): —of Daṇḍa); rapes Arajā, 827–28; youngest son of Ikṣvāku, 827

Daṇḍa (weapon): celestial discus, 80; divine weapon, 108

Daṇḍaka forest, 12, 32–33, 793, 798, *passim*; ashrams of, 264, 271, 274; Bharata decides to enter, 219; description of, 162; Janasthāna in, 828; Kaikeyī asks that Rāma be exiled to, 144, 150; Khara and Dūṣaṇa protect, 763–64; kingdom of Daṇḍa becomes, 828; Mārīca feeds on flesh of seers in, 305; *rākṣasas* inhabit, 273; Rāma enters, 12, 52, 56, 264, 304, 413, 434;—exiled to, 144, 150, 152, 168–69; makes safe for sages, 300;—vows to protect seers of, 271, 273;—wants to enter, 249; Rāma's exile to, recalled, 208–9, 245, 434, 510, 519–20; Rāvaṇa abducts Sītā in (*see* abduction: of Sītā by Rāvaṇa); Rāvaṇa sends Śūrpaṇakhā to, 33, 763–64; sages of, 271, 273, 296; Śūrpaṇakhā lives in, 287, 764; Virādha lives in, 265–66; Viśvāmitra's ashram in, 305

Danu: cursed by Sthūlaśiras (father of Kabandha), 344; as son of Śrī, 355. *See also* Kabandha

Danū (wife of Kaśyapa), 280

Dardara (mountain): Hanumān swears by, 489; Vinata, troop leader of monkeys, from, 558

Dardura (mountain), 227

Darīmukha, 541, 565; arrival of, in Kiṣkindhā, 397

Daśagrīva, "Ten-necked." *See* Rāvaṇa

Daśaratha, 12, 53, 61, *passim*; accedes to demands of Kaikeyī, 11, 143–45; actions of, raise ethical questions, 12, 23, 143, 187; alliance of, with Romapāda, 63–64; as role model, 12; attains heaven, 224, 230, 245, 254; becomes blind, 201; blind ascetic curses, 200–201; boons of, to Kaikeyī, 141, 143–44, 150, 160, 248, 316; breaks prenuptial promise, 23, 248; cancels Rāma's consecration, 149–51; character synopsis of, 23; curses Kaikeyī, 170; death of, 11, 201–2;—Rāma learns of, 241; debt of, 135, 233 249, 254; decides to consecrate Rāma, 11, 23, 52, 131–33; descriptions of, 23, 59, 480; designates Rāma as prince regent, 133–35; embalmment of, 202; ensnared by Kaikeyī's wiles and her two boons, 143–44; exiles Rāma, 11, 22, 149–51; faints from grief, 168; final audience of, with Rāma, 167–72; as foil for Rāma, 23; friendship of, with Jaṭāyus, 13, 279, 281, 417;—with Saṃpāti, 423;—with Vālmīki, 796; funeral libations of wives of, 213; funeral rites of, 212–13, 242; genealogy of, 121–22; gives earth to brahmans, 68; grief of, for Rāma, 52, 144–46, 149, 151, 168, 174, 184, 192, 201, 203, 209, 719; grief of wives of, 192;—over death of, 243–44; hears prophecy of 799; hears tale of Ṛśyaśṛṅga, 61;—of son of Sagara, 170; heavenly form of, appears, 711–12; inner apartments of, 149, 151, 168; journeys to Mithilā, 119–20; Kaikeyī as cause of death of, 187; —saves twice, 141; —speaks for, 150–51; Kausalyā reviles, 195–96; kills ascetic boy, 198–99; Lakṣmaṇa wants to imprison; 659;—to seize control of government from, 157, 163; Mantharā reviles, 139; marriage of sons of, 11, 125; ministers of, 60, 63, 64, 203–4, 724; model of righteous kingship, 12, 23; orders consecration of Rāma, 134; people curse, 171, 181;—praise, 138; performs birth and naming rites for sons, 71–72; permits Bharata to depart for Rājagṛha, 130; pleads with Bhārgava Rāma, 126; promise to, cannot be rendered false, 253; *purohita*(s) of (see *purohita*(s): of

Daśaratha not named); questions Durvāsas, 799;—Sumantra, 192–93; Rāma criticizes, 187 favorite son of, 130, 510; —questions Bharata about, 238; receives and distributes celestial porridge, 69–70; relationship of Kausalyā with, 23; remembers evil deed, 197; repudiates Bharata and Kaikeyī, 145; returns to Ayodhyā, 125–28; reunited with wives in heaven, 845; reviles Kaikeyī, 144–45, 175; Ṛśyaśṛṅga as sacrificial priest of, 10, 63–68; rules kingdom, 10, 59–60; sacrifice (*aśvamedha*) of, 61, 64–71, 238, 356; sacrifice (*rājasūya*) of, 238, 356; sacrifice (son-producing [*putrakāmeṣṭi*]) of, 10, 68–70; sacrificial priests of, 60; sends Rāma with Viśvāmitra, 73–75, 305; shoots by sound, 197–98; Sītā daughter-in-law of, 797; sons of, born, 71; subordination of royal duty to sexual infatuation by, 12, 23, 143, 187; suffers for lack of a son, 61, 64; Sumantra delivers Rāma's message to, 192–94; unable to speak because of grief, 149–51; under power of Kaikeyī, 143; Vasiṣṭha as sacrificial priest of, 64–68;—as *purohita* of, 64, 75, 136, 203, 214, 225; visits Ṛśyaśṛṅga, 63; Viṣṇu chooses, as his father, 10, 69; Viśvāmitra requests aid of, 10, 72–75, 305; wants Rāma to be accompanied by army, 169; wives of, adorn Sītā, 724; women of inner apartments of, 60, 70, 173–74, 192–93, 246

daśāvatāra (ten incarnations) of Viṣṇu, 21

dāsyabhāva (devotional service to chosen deity) in Vaiṣṇava theology, 26

date of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3, 8, 34

daughter(s): Analā, of Sundarī and Mālyavān, 734; Analā, of Vibhīṣaṇa, 489; as alms, 730; Balā and Atibalā as, of Brahmā, 76; death as punishment for man who lusts after, 371; Devavarṇinī, of Bharadvāja, 730; Devavatī, of Sukeśa, 733; Devayāni, of Uśanas Kāvya, 805; Ganges, of Himalaya and Menā, 87; Jayā and Suprabhā, of Prajāpati Dakṣa, 75; Kaikasī, of Sūmālin, 28, 740–41; Kaikeyī, of Aśvapati, 141, Keśinī, of king of Vidarbha, 90; Kumbhīnasī (the elder), of Sumālin, 734; Kumbhīnasī (the younger), of Viśvāvasu and Analā, 808; Māṇḍavī and Śrutakīrti, of Kuśadhvaja, 123, 125, 128; Mandodarī, of Maya and Hemā, 746; Mantharā, of Virocana, 79; Menā, of Meru, 87; *jānakī*, *janakātmaja* translated as, of Janaka,46; of Kuśanābha, story of, 84–86; Pārvatī (Umā), of Himalaya and Menā, 87; of Prājāpati Dakṣa, 280–81, of Tṛṇabindu, 729–30; Śacī, of Puloman, 490; Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā, of Sandhyā, 732; Śāntā, of Romapāda, 61, 63; Saramā, of Śailūṣa, 747; Śārmiṣṭha, of Vṛṣaparvan, 805; Sītā, of goddess of earth, 11, 19; Sītā, of Janaka (*see* Sītā); Somadā, of Ūrmilā (*gandharva* woman), 85–86; Sumati, of Ariṣṭanemi, 90; Śūrpaṇakhā, of Kaikasī and Viśravas, 29, 741; Tāra, of Suṣeṇa, 376; Tāṭakā, of Suketu, 78; unmarried, as source of trouble, suspicion, 741, 746; Ūrmīlā, of Janaka, 123; Vāruṇī, of Varuṇa, 98; Vedavatī, of Kuśadhvaja, 752–53; Vedavatī reborn as, of virtuous man, 21

death: as punishment, 371, 414, 513, 562, 850; by execution, 247; by fasting (*see* fast to death); not a punishment for emissaries, 512; untimely, as sign of wrongful conduct of king, 820

debt: to ancestors, 127, 248; of Daśaratha, 135, 233 249, 254; to gods and seers, 248

deer. *See* Mārīca: becomes a golden deer

description(s): of *aśoka* grove of Rāvaṇa, 456–58;—of Rāma, 725, 790–91; of auspicious marks of Rāma, 484–85;—of Sītā, 588–89; of autumn, 386; of battleground, 582; of Citrakūṭa, 232–33; of directions, 398–406; of eastern quarter, 398–400; of end of rainy season, 386; of feats of Rāvaṇa, 299; of forces of Rāma, 563–64; declares impossibility of spying on Rāma's forces, 563; of friendship, 358, 359; ideal kingdom of Rāma, 790; of Hanumān, 26–27, 379, 406, 425, 431; of Kailāsa, 405; of Kiṣkindhā, 390–91; of Kumbhakarṇa's sleeping chamber, 610, 747; of Laṅkā, 319, 437–50, 575–76, 734; of Laṅkā and defenses, 539; of rainy season, 382–83; of Mandākinī River (Ganges), 233–34; of northern quarter, 404–6; of ocean, 543; of palace of Rāvaṇa, 443–46; of Pampā 346–47, 349–52; of Pañcavaṭī, 281–82; of Puṣpaka, 445–46, 714; of rainy season, 382–83; of *rākṣasa* wardresses, 462, 469; of *rākṣasas*, 440–42; of Rāma (*see* Rāma: description of); of Rāvaṇa (*see* Rāvaṇa: descriptions of); of Sītā (*see* Sītā: description of); of social classes in *yugas*,

821–22; of southern quarter, 400–402; of Sugrīva's abode, 391; of Vālin (*see* Vālin: description of); of wives and courtesans of Rāvaṇa, 446–52; of western quarter, 402–4
destiny: as all powerful, 850; forces Rāma's exile, 155; previous actions determine, 850. *See also* fate
destruction. *See* cosmic destruction
Devāntaka: fights Aṅgada, 633–34; Hanumān fights and kill, 634; Kumbhakarṇa paternal uncle of, 628; leads *rākṣasas* into battle, 629–30; looks like Viṣṇu, 630; Vālin fights, 634
Devarāta, in lineage of Janaka, 122; Śiva gives bow to, 118, 127
Devavarṇinī: daughter of Bharadvāja, 730; mother of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, 730; wife of Viśravas, 730
Devavatī: daughter of Grāmaṇī, 733; mother of Mālin, Mālyavān, and Sumālin, 733; wife of Sukeśa, 733
Devayānī: daughter of Uśanas Kāvya, 805; mother of Yadu, 805; threatens suicide by poison, 806; wife of Yayāti, 805
Dhānyamālinī: Atikāya son of, 636; diverts Rāvaṇa from Sītā, 470
Dharaṇī (earth goddess): takes Sītā back, 843. *See also* Mādhavī; Vasudhā
Dharma (god of righteousness), 52, 75, 755; as father of Suṣeṇa, 563, 581; grants boon to crow, 755; Rāma as a second, 719; taken for weakness, 553; weapons of, 80, 108
dharma (righteousness), 4–5, 18, 20, 27, 40; discourse on (*see* discourse(s): on righteousness); in *Rāmāyaṇa*, 20; in *yuga* theory, 37; translation of word, 46. See also *rājadharma*; righteousness
Dharmabhṛt: tells story of Pañcāpsaras, 274
Dharmarāja (god of death), 200. *See also* Kāla; Kṛtānta; Mṛtyu; Vaivasvata; Yama
Dharmāraṇya: Ādhūrtarajasa founds, 84
dharmaśāstra: *Rāmāyaṇa* as, 5
Dhātṛ (the creator), 158, 278; Diti bears, 230
Dhṛṣti (minister of Daśaratha), 60
Dhūmaketu (minister of Rāvaṇa), 769
Dhūmaketu (planet), 464
Dhūmra (leader of apes): arrival of, in Kiṣkindhā, 397, 559, 622
Dhūmra (mountain), 394
Dhūmrākṣa: battles monkeys, 594–96; Hanumān fights and kills, 596; Māṇibhadra/Māṇicara strikes down in battle, 750; one of Rāvaṇa's six ministers, 749, 776–77, 778; son of Sumālin and Ketumatī, 734
digging of ocean. *See* ocean
Dilīpa, 122, 200, 218, 252; father of Bhagīratha, 94; son of Aṃśumant, 94; unable to bring Ganges to earth, 94, 96
disciple(s): Bharadvāja as, of Vālmīki, 54–55; Kuśa and Lava as, of Vālmīki, 6, 10, 17–18, 57, 839–41 (*see also* Kuśa; Lava); of Bharadvāja, 225–26; of sages, 728; of Śiva, 77; of Uśanas Kāvya, 828; of Vasiṣṭha, 104, 107; of Viśvāmitra, 111;—are images of Rāma, 840;—Rāma recognizes as sons, 842
discourse(s): on righteousness (*dharma*), 238, 272, 369–70, 571–72, 658–60, 850; on fate of Rāma, 378; on righteousness of Rāma to Vālin, 370–72; on statecraft (*nītiśāstra*), 104, 203, 239–241,488, 510–12, 547–546, 571–72, 677; of Kumbhakarṇa to Rāvaṇa, 31, 615–16, 619;—of Rāma to Vālin, 370–72; of Vālin to Rāma, 369–70
discus (*cakra*): of Dharma, 108; of Kāla, 108; of Viṣṇu, 80, 108, 290, 299, 403, 449, 644, 645, 709, 735, 736, 737, 739, 740, 768
Diti: austerities of 98–99; gives birth to *daityas*, 280, 744;—to Māruts, 99; Indra serves, 98;—smashes fetus of, 99; sons of, 97–98; wife of Kaśyapa, 98, 280, 744
divine weapon-spell(s). See *weapon-spells*
divinity/divinities: Hanumān as, 27; of Hinduism, 4. *See also* god; gods

dove: exemplary story of, 551–52
dream(s): as prophecy, 475; beliefs about, 205, 311, 347, 481, 483; of Bharata, 204–5; of Daśaratha, 135; of Lakṣmaṇa, 670; of Mārīca, 307; about monkeys inauspicious, 481, 483; of the *rākṣasas*, 571; of Sītā, 483; of Trijaṭā, 33–34, 56, 475–76
drinking ground/hall of Rāvaṇa 56, 450–53
drinking wine or liquor, 169, 196, 228–229, 257, 318, 363, 379, 387, 394, 428, 430, 444, 447, 449, 451, 462, 472, 476, 527–29, 542, 611, 613, 617, 646, 788; atonements for, 391
Droṇa (mountain in ocean of milk), 592
Dundubhi: as *asura*, 363; boon of, 362; as buffalo demon, 362; challenges ocean to fight, 362;—Himalaya to fight, 362; —Vālin to fight, 362–63; as *dānava*, 408; description of, 362; fights Vālin, 363; Māyāvin as son of, 360–61; Rāma kicks skeleton of, 53, 363; son of Maya, 746; Vālin kills, 363, 408
Durdhara (field marshal of Rāvaṇa): Hanumān, fights and kills, 503
Durvāsas, 837, 841; ashram of, 850; curse of, 40; Daśaratha questions, 799; demands freshly cooked meal, 850; fasting of, 850; foretells future to Daśaratha, 799; Lakṣmaṇa announces arrival of, 850; son of Atri, 798; threatens curse, 849–50; in Vasiṣṭha's ashram, 788–89; visits Rāma, 849–50
Dūṣaṇa (general of Khara's army), 32, brother of Khara, 284, Khara addresses, 289; made chief of Khara's army, 763; protects Daṇḍaka forest, 763–64; rallies *rākṣasas*, 293; Rāma fights and kills, 52, 293; Rāma fights and kills recalled, 300–301, 303, 327, 461, 480, 564, 585, 652, 677, 697, 716; Rāvaṇa sends, to Daṇḍaka forest with Khara, 763–64; Śūpaṇakhā tells Rāma about, 284
dust storm as curse, 828
Dutt, Madhusudana, 32
duty: dereliction of, by Sugrīva, 387–88; of king with advisors, 307–9;—to ascetics, 264–65;—in behavior toward others' wives, 321;—in hunting, 311;—Jaṭāyus on, 321;—as protector of people, 264–65, 269;—for Rāma, 264–65;—Śūrpaṇakhā on, 299–300
Dvāpara Yuga, 38, 821
Dvivida, 380, 390, 440, *passim*; arrives in Kiṣkindhā, 397; boon of, from Brahmā, 525; cut down in battle, 565; declares prowess in leaping, 424; drinks nectar of immortality, 525, 560; fights and kills Aśaniprabha, 581–82; gods create, 787; in southern search party, 400, 411; invulnerability of, 525; number of troops of, 397; participates in Sugrīva's consecration, 380; Rāma gives gifts to, 726; son of the Aśvins, 397, 525, 564; takes picket duty, 543. *See also* Mainda
dwarf: *rākṣasa* woman as, 462
dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu (*vāmanāvatāra*): story of, 81–82

earth: entering of, by Sītā, 19, 843
earth goddess. *See* Dharaṇī; Mādhavī; Vasudhā
eastern quarter: description of, 398–400; dispatching of search party to, 398–400, 407
eastern search party: dispatching of, to northern quarter, 398–400, 407; failure of, to find Sītā, 408–9; Vinata as leader of, 398, 407
eating: of dogs' flesh forbidden, 114; of five-clawed creatures, 370; of lizard by brahmans and kshatriyas, 370; of meat, 187, 227–29, 451, 611, 788, 812, 791; of own corpse, 278, 824–25. *See also* flesh; flesh-eating; flesh of humans
Ekākṣipiñgala (epithet of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa): etymology of name of, 748
ekaveṇī (single braid). *See* Sītā: braid of
elements, fear Rāvaṇa, 315, 318–19; grieve for Sītā, 325
elephants who support the earth: sons of Sagara encounter, while digging up the earth, 92–93. *See also* Bhadra; Mahāpadma; Saumanasa; Virūpākṣa
elixir of immortality. *See* nectar of immortality

embalming. *See* corpses, preservation of; preservation, of bodies
emendations: based on manuscript evidence, 6n
emic history of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 34, 37–40
epics: historicity of, 37; of Aryan society, 40
etic history of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 34
etymology: of "Ahalyā," 774; of "*apsaras*," 98; of "*aśoka*," 334; of "*asura*," 98; of "Ayodhyā," 240; of "Daṇḍa," 827; of "Ekākṣipiñgala," 748; of "Hanumān," 426, 561, 784; of "Janaka," 805; of "Jātarūpa," 90; of "Mānasa," 77; of "Māruta," 99; of "Mithi," 805; of "Pañcāpsaras," 247; of "*putra*," 249; of "*rākṣasa*," 732; of "Rāvaṇa" 768; of "Saramā," 747; of "Sarayū," 77; of "Śatrughna," 815; of "Sītā,' " 118; of "Skanda," 90; of "*śloka*," 55; of Tripathaga, 88; of "*yakṣa*," 732
exemplary story/stories, Budha tells, to Ila, 836; of dove offering own flesh, 551–52; Lakṣmaṇa tells, of Indra, 830–33; Rāma tells, of Ila, 833–37. *See also* cautionary tales
exile: of Asamañja, 97; of Lakṣmaṇa (*see* Lakṣmaṇa: Rāma banishes); of Rāma (*see* Rāma: Daśaratha exiles); of Sugrīva (*see* Sugrīva: Vālin exiles)

falcons: fourth path in sky that of, 419
fasting: of Agastya, 277; of ascetics, 264, 302, 348; of Bharata, 722; Bharata threatens, against Rāma, 253; of Durvāsas, 850; of Kausalyā, 230; of Mārīca, 303; as a means of death, 414, 454; of Rāma, 223, 251, 306; of Sītā, 459, 465, 483, 518, 521, 544, 655, 796; of Svayaṃprabhā, 412; of wives of Daśaratha, 223
fast to death: Añgada urges monkeys to, 414; decision of Añgada to, 416, 417; decision of southern search party to, 14, 414, 416–18, 454, 486; of Tārā, 375, 377; of wives of Vālin, 375
fate: *passim*; as Kāla, 343; contrasted with human action, 110, 659, 156; Rāma reflects upon, 852; Rāma relies on, as well as human effort, 488; Rāvaṇa under the power of, 329, 489, 693, 756; Sītā blames, for her suffering, 469, 704, 802; Sītā's abduction ordained by, 469; for what cannot be explained, 155; wife must follow her husband's, 161. *See also* destiny
feeding: of Bharata and his army by Bharadvāja, 226–29; brahmans and guests at *aśvamedha*, 55–67, 838–39
feticide, 209–10, 263; Indra attempts, 99; poison as a means of, 252; by surgeon, 477
fire, *passim*; as witness, 346 356, 359, 523. *See also* Agni, as witness
fire ordeal. *See* ordeal by fire
five-clawed creatures: eating of, 370
five-headed serpents, 388, 431, 449, 509, 511, 684–85
flesh: Agastya eats, of Vātāpi (*rākṣsasa*), 275–76; battleground thick with, 580, 715; birds and beasts that eat, as inauspicious omens, 290, 600; body of Dundubhi heavier with, 363, carnivorous beasts gorge on, 679; carrion birds gorge on, 286, 599–600, 652; crow as hungry for, 492; demons as eaters of, 613; dove offers own, 551; eating of dogs' forbidden, 114; Garuḍa eats, of tortoise and elephant, 303; Kumbhakarṇa craves, 626; Kumbhakarṇa drenches earth with, 624; lions as eaters of, 196; malignant spirits crave, of *gandharvas*' sons, 845; marks Narāntaka's path, 632; Muṣṭikas as eaters of dogs', 111; of black deer fit for sacrifice, 191; of gazelles, 342; of goats given to brahmans, 212–13; of monkeys forbidden to brahmans and kshatriyas, 370; of Śarabhañga consumed by sacrificial fire, 268; of stag eaten by tiger, 373; offering of, for eating, 812–13; Śveta eats own, 825; Triśiras as eater of raw, 303; vultures become eaters of, 419
flesh-eating: by beasts, 196, 290, 330, 758, 846; by *rākṣasas*, 83, 196, 290, 332, 334, 441, 474, 521, 587, 613, 732, 780; by spirits, 846. *See also* cannibalism; eating: of meat
flesh of humans: ascetics who mistreat guests destined to eat own, 278; ferocious creatures eat, 158–59; eating of, 812–13; illusory cook offers, to Saudāsa, 812; Mārīca eats (of seers), 305–6; *rākṣasas*

as eaters of, 28, 83, 87, 273, 276, 288, 327, 332, 334, 346, 587, 603, 612, 732, 780; *rākṣasa* women as eaters of, 330, 462, 472, 475, 521; Saudasa cursed eat, 813; Śveta cursed to eat his own, 825; Vasiṣṭha offered, 813; Vātāpi and Ilvala eat, 276; Virādha eats, 256
floral garland, 25, 137, 166, 320, 380, 391, 448, 465, 646, 650; of Sugrīva, 25, 365 (see also *gajapuṣpī* garland)
floral offerings, 176, 265, 264, 275, 278, 282, 348, 356, 395, 446, 451, 583, 641, 703, 776, 790
flying chariot(s): of Brahmā, 733; of Daśaratha; 711–12; of the gods, 609, 702, 708, 713, 845, *passim*; of Indra, 267;—Rāma uses, 689–90; returns to heaven, 702; of Indrajit, 32, 764 (*see also* Indrajit); of Rāvaṇa, 302, 309, 320, 701;—Jaṭāyus destroys, 322–23. *See also* chariots; Puṣpaka(vimāna)
framing narrative: of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 9
fraternal conflict: as theme of *Mahābhārata*, 26;—of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 24–28. *See also* sibling rivalry
full-moon day, 107, 149, 682, 788; of Āṣāḍha, 383
full-moon night, 138, 176, 485
full-moon rites, 106
funerary libations, 56, 93, 94,95, 97; for Jaṭāyus by Rāma 342;—by Saṃpāti, 420; for Vālin by Sugrīva, 360. *See also* water-offerings
funerary rites, 202, 208, 209, 222, 241, 812, 820, for Daśaratha, 212–13; for Rāvaṇa, 28, 30, 34, 702, for Vālin, 378–79

Gādhi (king), 755; son of Kuśanābha, 86, 104; Viśvāmitra son of, 72, 104, 105, 108
Gaja (monkey troop leader), 390, 411, 541, *passim*; fights and kills Tapana, 581; leader of one hundred million monkeys, 560; marches before the army, 540; member of southern search party, 400; participates in Sugrīva's consecration, 380; prowess in jumping of, 424; one of the five sons of Vaivasvata, 564
gajapuṣpī garland: as distinguishing feature, 364; Lakṣmaṇa gives to Sugrīva, 364–65
Gandhamādana, 574, 580, 587, 641, 643, 788, *passim*; exhaustion of, 410, 411 413; arrival of, in Kiṣkindhā, 397; declares prowess in jumping, 424; launches attack on Indrajit's horses, 669; marches on left flank of army, 540; member of southern search party, 400; number of monkey troops of, 397; one of the five tigers among monkeys, 623;—sons of Vaivasvata, 564; participates in Sugrīva's consecration, 380
Gandhamādana (monkey troop leader), 380; advises southern search party, 410, 424, ; declares prowess in jumping, 424; leads left flank of army, 540; member of southern search party, 400, 411; number of troops of, 397; one of five sons of Vaivasvata, 564;—"tigers among monkeys," who rush Kumbhakarṇa, 623
Gandhamādana (mountain), 189, 458
Gāndhāra (name of a region), 847
gandharva(*s*) (class of semi-divine beings), 52, 57, 68, *passim*; armies of, battle Bharata's army, 846–47; Babhru as, 402; Bharadvāja invokes, to entertain Bharata, 227–28; Bhikṣu as, 402; of gods, 227; Gopa as, 228; Grāmaṇī as, 402; Haha as, 227; Huhu as, 227; king(s) of, 228;—Rāma as image of, 133, 170;—and Lakṣmaṇa as images of, 286; lords of, 228, 402; Nārada as, 228; Parvata as, 228; Rohitas as class of, 402; Śailūṣa as, 402, 747; Śubhra as, 402; Sūryavarcasa as, 228; Tumburu as, 228; 266; Viśvāvasu as, 435; weapon-spell of, 705
gandharva woman/women (class of semi-divine beings): Alambusā as, 228; gods father sons on, 70; Miśrakeśī as, 228; Narmadā as, 734; Puṇḍarīkā as, 228; Somadā as, 85, 101–2; Vāmanā as, 228; Vasudā ass, 734
Gandhi: on Rāmarājya, 42

Ganges (name and personification of river) (Jāhnavī, Bhāgīrathī, Mandākinī, Tripathaga), 182, 184, 745, 755, 766, 776, 778; as Bhāgirathī, 96, 186, 188, 222, 298, 795; Bharata encamps at, with army, 220–24;—ferries across, 224–25; birthplace of Agni, 732; daughter of Himalaya, 87–88; descent of, to earth, 94–97; as Jāhnavī, 14, 77, 84, 87, 184, 217, 259, 79–97, 811; as Mandākinī, 745, 766; Rāma fords (Mandākinī), 186–87; —has Lakṣmaṇa abandon Sītā on banks of, 794–97; role of in Skanda's birth, 89–90; Śiva checks fall of (Mandākinī), 95;—releases, into Lake Bindu, 95; Sītā makes vow to, 186–87;—wishes to visit (Mandākinī), 791; as Tripathaga, 88
Gārgya (son of Aṅgiras): *guru* and messenger of Yudhājit, 845–46
Gārgya Trijaṭa. *See* Trijaṭa Gārgya
garland(s). *See* floral garland; *gajapuṣpī* garland; gold garland; gold necklace
garuḍa (name of a military formation), 563
Garuḍa (Vainateya, Suparṇa), 159, 266, 307, 329, 368, 593, 736, 778, *passim*; advises Aṃśumant, 93–94; ascetics rescued by, 302–3; as *avis ex machina*, 24; drives off *rākṣasas*, 737, 740;—serpent weapons of Indrajit, 592–93; as enemy of snakes, 23, 24, 175, 373, 427, 430, 468, 499, 506, 592–93, 609, 624, 629, 633, 644, 779, 781; fights Mālin, 738–39; forced to retreat by Mālin, 738–39; as Garutmant second life breath of Rāma, 592; genealogy of, 280–81; Hanumān as celebrated as, 425; heads toward Meru, 644; heals serpent wounds of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 592; one of three who can cross ocean, 495, 535, 537; power of, 427, 782;—of, to cross ocean, 495, 535;—of vision of, 419; Rāma's arrow fletched with feathers of, 698; ravages Nīṣāḍa realm, 303; sister of Sumati, 91, son of Vinatā, 280; steals nectar, 302–3; uncle of Aṃśumant, 93; as Vainateya drives off Mālyavān, 740; Viśvakarman constructs residence of, 399; weapon spell of, 690; weapon spell of, 690
Gautama: and Ahalyā, 100–102; asceticism of, 774; ashram of, 100, 774, 802; Brahmā gives Ahalyā to, 774; cures Indra, 774; curses Ahalyā, 101, 774;—Indra to lose testicles, 101; husband of Ahalyā, 774; one of the seven seers, 728; performs sacrifice for Nimi, 802
Gavākṣa (langur), 390, 400, 573, *passim*; arrival of, in Kiṣkindhā, 397; declares prowess in jumping, 424; fights Kumbhakarṇa, 623; and Gavaya march in lead, 540; joins fight against Mahāpārśva, 682; king of langurs, 397; leads seven million monkeys, 558; langur, 560, 580, member of southern search party, 400; one of five sons of Vaivasvata, 564;—"tigers among monkeys," who rush Kumbhakarṇa, 623; participates in Sugrīva's consecration, 380; troop leader of the langurs, 559
Gavaya (monkey), 390, 540, 574, *passim*; and Gavākṣa, march in lead, 540; brings golden vessel of camphor and sandalwood paste, 725; declares prowess in jumping, 424; leads seven million monkeys, 558; member of southern search party, 400, 411; participates in Sugrīva's consecration, 380; son of Vaivasvata, 564; surrounded by one hundred million monkeys, 560
gender transformation: of animals 833; of Ila and his attendants, 833–34; of Siva, 833
genealogy: of creatures as narrated by Jaṭāyus, 280–81; of Garuḍa, 280–81; of Ikṣvākus, 121–122, 303–4; of Janaka, 122–23; of *rākṣasas*, 16, 729–35; of Rāvaṇa and his siblings, 16, 740–42; of solar dynasty, 251–52; of Viśvāmitra, 103. *See also* lineage
Ghṛtācī, (*apsaras*): attachment of Viśvāmitra to, 392; mother of hundred daughters of Kuśanābha, 84
Girivraja (city): founded by Vasu, 84, 204. *See also* Rājagṛha
Go (unidentified): fights Rāvaṇa, 761; goes forth with Puṣkara, 761
god: of craft (*see* Viśvakarman); of death (*see* Dharmarāja; Kāla; Mṛtyu; Vaivasvata); of fire (*see* Agni); of love (*see* Kāma); of marriage (*see* Bhaga); of ocean (*see* Sāgara; Varuṇa); of rain (*see* Parjanya); of righteousness (*see* Dharma); of sun (*see* Sūrya); of waters (*see* Varuṇa); of wealth (*see* Kubera Vaiśravaṇa); of wind (*see* Vāyu)
Godāvarī (river), 279, 281–84, 342, *passim*; fears Rāvaṇa, 315; Rāma questions, 336; Sītā implores, for aid, 321;—threatens to drown herself in, 314
goddesses. *See individual names*

gods: Aditi gives birth to, 744; age of, 267; ask Viṣṇu to kill sons of Sukeśa, 735; assembly of, witness Sītā's oath, 842; Brahmā calms fears of, 816–17; Bṛhaspati as *purohita* of, 339; drive off *rākṣasa* army, 771; fight *rākṣasas*, 769–73; grant boons to Lakṣmaṇa, 817;—to animals, 754; —to Hanumān, 785–86; honor Hanumān, 436; Indrajit breaks army of, 770; Mālin battles, 738–49; perform *aśvamedha* for Indra, 832; plead with Viṣṇu to incarnate, 10, 68–69; remind Brahmā of Kumbhakarṇa's crimes, 743; seek aid of Agastya, 276; and seers, take refuge with Śiva, 735; shrines to, at Agastya's ashram, 278; as sons of Aditi, 97–98, 280, 744; stop Brahmā from granting boon to Kumbhakarṇa, 743; Sumālin battles, 739–40; supplicate Brahmā for relief, 784–85; take on forms of animals, 754; take refuge with Śiva (Maheśvara), 735; test Hanumān, 434–35; visit ashram of Agastya, 823; worship Lakṣmaṇa as fourth part of Viṣṇu, 851. *See also individual names*
golden deer. *See* Mārīca: becomes a golden deer
golden image: of Sītā, 18, 838
golden tree. *See* omens
gold garland: of Indra (Vāsava), 784; of Vālin, 376–77, 781 (*see also* gold necklace)
gold necklace: Indra has Vāyu give Rāma, 725; of Sugrīva, 561; Vālin receives, from Indra (Śakra), 263, 368–69. *See also* gold garland
Gomatī (river), 181, 206, 557, 718, 722, 795, 799, 838
gomedha (cow sacrifice), 764
Gomukha (son of Mātali), 770
gosava (name of sacrifice), 845
gośīrṣa sandalwood, 390
Govinda. *See* Viṣṇu
Grāmaṇī (*gandharva* lord), 402; Devavatī daughter of, 733
grammar: Hanumān learns, 787
grief: of abducted women, 762–63; of Aṅgada (*see* Aṅgada: grief of); of Ayodhyā (*see* Ayodhyā: grief of); of Bharata (*see* Bharata: grief of); of brahman father of dead child, 820; of Daśaratha (*see* Daśaratha: grief of, for Rāma); of Daśaratha's wives (*see* Daśaratha: grief of wives of); destroys everything, 197; of Devayānī, 806; of the forest, 194–97; of Hanumān (*see* Hanumān: grief of); of Ila (*see* Ila: grief of); impossible to withstand unexpected, 197; as inspiration for the *Rāmāyaṇa*, 54–55; of Janaka (*see* Janaka: grief of), 202; of Kausalyā (*see* Kausalyā: grief of); of Lakṣmaṇa (*see* Lakṣmaṇa: grief of); of Madhu, 808; of Mālin's brothers, 739; of Mandodarī, 700–701; as metaphor of, as ocean, 214, 288; of monkey women (*see* monkey women: grief of); of monkeys (*see* monkeys: grief of); of mothers of slain *rākṣasas*, 501; of no use to the dead, 378; of parents of slain ascetic, 199–201; of the people of Ayodhyā, 11, 168, 170–72, 174–75, 180, 259, 315, 326–30, 332, 515, 815; of Rāma (*see* Rāma: grief of); of Rāvaṇa (*see* Rāvaṇa: grief of); of Saṃpāti (*see* Saṃpāti: grief of); of Śatrughna (*see* Śatrughna: grief of); of Sugrīva (*see* Sugrīva: grief of); as a sea, 214; of Sītā (*see* Sītā: grief of); of Sumantra (*see* Sumantra: grief of); of Surabhi, 210–11; of Śūrpaṇakhā (*see* Śūrpaṇakhā: grief of); of Tārā (*see* Tārā: grief of); of *rākṣasa* women (see *rākṣasa* women: grief of); sight of Rāma will allay, 219; of the women of Ayodhyā, 174, 180, 201–2; of women abducted by Rāvaṇa, 762–64; of wounded ascetic, 198; vitiates efforts, 538
guardian elephants (*diggajas*). *See* Añjana; Mahāpadma; Padma; Vāmana
guest-offering(s) (*arghya*[s]), 55, 62, 72, 77, 102, 182, 126, 189, 225, 226, 278, 717, 757, 780, 797, 812, 818, 848
Guha (1), 41, 191, 194, 238, 605, 717–18; extends hospitality to Bharata, 220–25, 236;—to Rāma, 182–86; extols virtues of Lakṣmaṇa to Bharata, 221–22; ferries Bharata and army across Ganges River, 224–25; Rāma dismisses, 186
Guha (2). *See* Skanda
guhyakas, 291, 628, 638, 785; with Kubera on Mt. Kailāsa, 405

Haha (*gandharva* lord), 227
Haihayas, 252, 775, 778, 780; Arjuna Kārtavīrya king of, 775, 778–79, 780
hair. *See* Sītā: braid of
hair ornament: of Sītā, 56, 494, 497, 532, 534
haṃsa(s), 87, 95, 159, *passim*; Puṣpaka yoked to, 825; sixth path in sky that of, 419; Varuṇa grants boon to, 755; yearning of, to live on Lake Mānasa, 382
hanging: as a means of suicide, 454; Sītā threatens, 314, 478
Hanumān: ability of, to leap the ocean, 426, 437; adoptive son of Kesarin, 397, 428; advises Sugrīva, 384–85, 389–90; Agastya praises, 787; Añjanā mother of, 426; announces Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Sūgrīva, 356; arrives in Laṅkā, 436–39; asks permission to kill Sītā's wardresses, 704; attacks and burns Laṅkā, 14, 27, 514–15, 540, 544, 782–83; attacks and is driven back by Indrajit, 656; attempts to devour Airāvata, 784; battles *rākṣasas*, 499–506, 513–14;—recalled, 782–83; bears Sītā's message to Rāma, 704–5; Bharata gives gifts to, 719; birth of, 425–26, 487, 783; boons of, 426, 508, 785–86; Brahmā revives, 785; brahmans curse, 786; breaks free of bonds, 514; brings healing herbs for Lakṣmaṇa, 645, 688;—water for Rāma's consecration, 725; broods, 438–42, 445, 452–55, 460, 515, 688; carries Lakṣmaṇa from battlefield, 608; challenges Indrajit to combat, 663; character synopsis of, 26–27; childhood of, 16, 426, 560–61, 783–87; consoles Sītā, 14, 487–90, 495–96, 516; commits offenses against the seers, 786; confidence of, 427–28; confidence of Rāṃa in, 407; —of Sugrīva in, 406–7; considers pros and cons of accosting Sītā, 478–80; consoles Tārā, 375; contemplates killing Rāvaṇa, 455;—suicide, 455; counselor of Sugrīva, 13, 27, 356, 390; crushes Mount Ariṣṭa, 516–17;—Mount Mahendra, 428–30, 517; —mountains in leaping, 644; decides on language to address Sītā, 479;—to assault *rākṣasas*, 498; describes Laṅkā and defenses, 539;—Rāma to Sītā, 483–85; descriptions of, 26–27, 379, 406, 425, 431; destroys armies of Rāvaṇa's field marshals, 503; devastates Laṅkā, 14, 540, 544; as devotee of one's lord, 5; —of Rāma. 27, 31;—of Rāma and Sītā, 26, 789; did not know his own strength, 783; divinity of, 27; does not follow Rāma to heaven, 27, 853; dragged before Rāvaṇa, 508; elation of, 440, 450, 460, 463, 526; eloquence of, 353–56, 479, 550; encounters Indrajit, 506–9;—Mount Maināka, 432–34, 716;—Surasā, 434–35; encounters and kills Siṃhikā, 436; enters the *aśoka* grove, 456; epithets of, 45; essential actor in Sītā's rescue, 494; etymology of name of, 426, 561, 784–85; exhorts Aṅgada, 415;—monkeys, 625, 657; fears consequences of his failure, 454;—he has killed Sītā, 515; feats of, 27, 782–83, *passim*;—Rāma recounts, 783–84; fetches mountain of healing herbs, 644–45, 688; fights and is stunned by Kumbhakarṇa, 623–24;—by Rāvaṇa, 605–6; fights and kills Akampana (1), 597–98;—Akṣa, 504–5;—Bhāsakarṇa, 503;—Devāntaka, 634;—Dhūmrākṣa, 594–96;—Durdhara, 503;—Jambumālin (1), 500–501; —Jambumālin (2), 581;—Nikumbha, 650–51;—Praghasa, 503;—*rākṣasas*, 499–506;—seven sons of minister, 501–2; —Triśiras, 634–35;—Virūpākṣa, 503; —Yūpākṣa, 503; fights and stuns Rāvaṇa, 608; finds and consoles Sītā, 14, 459–97; fire does not burn, 514; flatters Sītā, 481; flees Kumbhakarṇa, 622; friendship of, with Sugrīva, 787; gives signet ring of Rāma to Sītā, 14, 27, 487, 522;—Sītā's hair ornament to Rāma, 532; gods grant boons to, 785–86;—honor, 436; greatest leaper, 426–27; grief of, 453, 455, 656–57; history of, recounted by Agastya, 18, 783–87; Indra grants boons to, 785–86; Indrajit fights and captures with divine weapons, 14, 32, 56, 507–8;—pierces with arrows, 666; informs Sugrīva of safety on Mount Ṛśyamūka, 408; introduces Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Sugrīva, 356; Jāmbavān instructs, to bring healing herbs, 27, 643–44, 688;—praises, 426–27; —questions, 519;—sees, as only hope for survival, 643; jaw of, broken, 426, 784; kills a hundred palace guards, 500;—*kiṃkaras*, 499–500; —Siṃhikā, 436; kindles fire to solemnize pact, 356; Kubera grants boons to, 786; as langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*) 47; leader of Sugrīva's companions, 359; leads monkeys into cavern of Svayaṃprabhā, 411–12; leaping of, 14, 53, 56, 429–37, 516–18, 547, 561, 706;—to mountain of healing herbs, 644–45, 688;—to sun, 426–27; learns grammar, 787; length of life of, 789, 853; life

span of, as “long-lived one (*cirajīvin*),” 25, 27, 853; Maināka provides resting place for, 432; mauls Rāhu, 784–85; meets Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 13, 53, 56, 354–56;—Sītā, 480–97, 516–17; member of southern search party, 13, 400, 410; messenger of Rāma, 482–83, 486, 510–11; —of Sugrīva, 510; mind of, undisturbed by sight of Rāvaṇa’s women, 452; mistakes Airāvata for fruit, 784;—Mandodarī for Sītā, 450;—the sun for fruit, 783; monkey nature of, 450, 515; monkeys delighted at success of mission of, 518; mourns fallen Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 585; never lies, 355; observes *rākṣasa* women, 462;—Rāvaṇa, 14, 448–49, 463–64;—Rāvaṇa’s women in the drinking hall, 446–48;—the *rākṣasas*, 440–52;—Sītā, 462–65; offers to carry Sītā back to Rāma, 14, 490–92; paraded through Laṅkā with tail on fire, 513; participates in consecration of Sugrīva, 380; plans to console Sītā, 479;—kill *rākṣasa* champions, 498; power of, to leap ocean unique, 14; Prahasta interrogates, 509–10; praises Rāma to Sītā, 483–85; prepares to leap ocean, 427–28; questions Svayaṃprabhā, 412; *rākṣasas* bind, 508–10;—set tail of, on fire, 513–14; Rāma asks Agastya history of, 782–83; —dispatches, to tell Sītā of victory, 34, 703; —dispatches, to Ayodhyā as messenger to Bharata, 717–19;—gives gifts to, 788–89; —gives, pearl necklace, 789;—gives, signet ring as token of recognition, 14, 407;—orders Sugrīva and, to care for Lakṣmaṇa, 687;—orders Vibhīṣaṇa and, to remain on earth, 853;—praises, 537, 782–83;—questions, about Sītā, 533;—tells Vibhīṣaṇa and, to remain alive, 853; ravages *aśoka* grove and domed palace, 498, 500; Rāvaṇa falsely reports, as slain, 565; Rāvaṇa orders execution of, 511;—*kiṃkaras* to capture, 499;—tail of, set on fire, 513; —sentences to death, 512; reassured by auspicious omens, 515–16; rebukes Sugrīva for negligence, 389–90; recounts adventures in Laṅkā to monkeys, 519–24;—to Rāma, 531–32; reflects on propriety of observing Rāvaṇa’s women, 452;—Sītā’s history and appearance, 460–61; relationship of, to Sāgara, 433;—to Vāyu, 432; released from Brahma’s weapon, 508; remains alive as long as *Rāmāyaṇa* remains current, 853; replaces mountain of healing herbs, 645; reports adventures of Rāma to Bharata, 719–21;—adventures to Rāma and Sugrīva, 14–15, 531–32;—apparent murder of Sītā to Rāma, 658;—on Laṅkā’s defenses, 539–40;—Rāma’s return to Bharata, 719;—Rāma’s return to Guha, 717–18;—Rāma’s victory to Sītā, 703; —to monkeys on his mission, 518–24; —to Rāma on his meeting with Sītā, 531–36; requests release from cave (cavern) of Maya, 413; resolves to leap the ocean, 429; retells adventures of Rāma and the monkeys, 485–86;—exile of Rāma to Rāvaṇa, 510–11;—Sītā of Rāma’s exile, 480, 485–86; reviles Indrajit, 656; Sāgara seeks rest for, on Mount Maināka, 432; sanctions monkeys’ assault on Madhuvana, 14, 527; searches *aśoka* grove, 455–59;—for healing herbs, 27, 645, 688;—for Sītā in Laṅkā, 14, 439–59, for Sītā in Laṅkā, recalled, 531–32, 782; —Rāvaṇa’s inner apartments, 56, 452–53, 520, 531–32;—Rāvaṇa’s palace, 442–45; seeks refuge with Svayaṃprabhā, 413; seers curse, 786; serves as Rāma’s mount, 540, 608; sets fire to Laṅkā, 14, 27, 514–15; shaken by power of Rāvaṇa, 464; Siṃhikā seizes shadow of, 436; Sītā begs, to stay in Laṅkā, 495;—denies knowing, 498–99; —exhorts, 494–95;—fears, 481–83;—gives gifts to 726;—gives, hair ornament, 494, 497;—gives, hair ornament, recounted, 532;—gives, her message to Rāma, 496–97;—gives, pearl necklace, 726;—prays to Agni for fire not to burn, 513–14;—questions, about Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 487–89;—refuses offer of, to rescue, 14, 490–92;—tells, of Rāma’s banishment and her abduction, 481–82; —tells, the crow episode, 492–93; —thinks, is Rāvaṇa, 482; Śiva grants boons to, 786; size of, changeable, 412, 427, 429–30, 435–36, 438–39, 455–56, 490, 497–98, 514, 517, 534; son of the wind god, 27, 355–56, 427, *passim*; sows dissension among monkeys, 415; speaks in favor of accepting Vibhīṣana, 551; —Sanskrit, 479; speed of, 430–31, 435, 644; stationed at Laṅkā’s western gate, 574; submits to the power of Brahmā’s weapon, 508; Sugrīva instructs, to find Sītā, 406;—orders, to summon monkeys, 394;—praises, 529;—sends, to meet Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 353–54; Surasā asked to create an obstacle for, 434; surveys Laṅkā, 437–42, 513; Sūrya does not burn, 432, 783;—grants boons to, 786; Suṣeṇa instructs, to bring healing herbs, 27, 688; takes form of a mendicant, 354; takes on human form, 718; Tārā rejects advice of, 375; tears off peak of mountain of healing herbs,

645, 688; tells Rāma Sītā's message, 532; tells Rāvaṇa to return Sītā, 511–12; —Svayaṃprabhā of search party's adventures, 413; terrorizes Sītā's *rākṣasa* wardresses, 498–99; tries to devour Airāvata, 784;—the sun, 426–27, 783; unable to find healing herbs, 645, 688; unburnt through Sītā's truth-act, 513–14; urges monkeys to drink honey-wine, 527; Varuṇa grants boons to, 786; Vāyu as divine father of, 426, 783; Vibhīṣaṇa and, searches for survivors, 642–43; Vibhīṣaṇa dissuades Rāvaṇa from executing, 512–13; Viśvakarman grants boons to, 786; warns Rāvaṇa of his destruction, 511–12; witnesses murder of illusory Sītā, 655–56; wreaks destruction among the *rākṣasas*, 663, 668; Yama grants boons to, 786
Hara. *See* Śiva
Hara (monkey troop leader), 558, 574
Hara (*rākṣasa* son of Mālin), 734
harem. *See* inner apartments
Hari. *See* Viṣṇu (Hari)
hariśyāma sandalwood, 402
Hāritas (tribal clan): produced from wish-fulfilling cow, 107
Harivaṃśa, 21
Hastinapura, 35–36, 204
Hayagrīva (*dānava*): Viṣṇu kills, 403
healing herbs, 27, 430; Bṛhaspati restores *dānavas* with, 591–92; Hanumān fetches, 644–45, 688; mountain of, 643, 645; on Mount Candra, 592; on Mount Droṇa, 592; *mṛtasaṃjīvaṇī*, "restorer of life," 592, 643; *saṃdhānī*, "joiner of limbs," 643; *saṃjīvakaraṇī*, "restorer of life," 592, 643; *sauvarṇakaraṇī*, "restorer of the golden glow," 643; Suṣeṇa recounts story of, 591–92; *viśalyā*(*karaṇī*), "healer of arrow wounds," 159, 592, 643
hedgehog: eating of, 370
Hemā (*apsaras*): Brahmā grants boon to, 412; friendship of, with Svayaṃprabhā, 412; mother of Mandodarī, 746; relationship of, with Maya, 412; wife of Maya, 746
herb(s): for healing, 27, 430;—Bṛhaspati restores *dānavas* with, 591–92;—Hanumān fetches, 644–45, 688;—mountain of, 643, 645;—on Mount Candra, 592;—on Mount Droṇa, 592;—*mṛtasaṃjīvaṇī*, "restorer of life" as, 592, 643;—*saṃdhānī*, "joiner of limbs" as, 643; *saṃjīvakaraṇī*, "restorer of life" as, 592, 643; *sauvarṇakaraṇī*, "restorer of the golden glow" as, 643; Suṣeṇa recounts story of, 591–92; *viśalyā*(*karaṇī*, "healer of arrow wounds" as, 159, 592, 643; for protection, 630
Heti: founds lineage of *rākṣasas*, 732; marries Bhayā (sister of Kāla), 732
Himagiri (mountain): *siṃha* birds live on slope of, 402
Himalaya (mountain personified): Dundubhi challenges to fight, 362; father-in-law of Śiva (Śaṅkara), 362; gives Ganges to gods, 87; in northern quarter, 404; refuses to fight with Dundubhi, 362; takes form as cloud, 362
Himalayas (mountain or mountain range), 27, 30, 51, *passim*
Hinduism, 37; cosmic cycles in, 4 (see also *yuga*[*s*]), 4; cyclical time in, 37 (see also *yuga*[*s*]); divinities of, 4; in religious history of *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, 40; Vaiṣṇavism as movement of, 34
historical narrative (*itihāsa*): *Rāmāyaṇa* as, 4, 36–37, 39
historicity: of epics, 37; of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 36
histories of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, 34–41
history: concepts of, differ, 34; contestation over *Mahābhārata* as, 37; of discus of Viṣṇu, 403; of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 19; of *Rāmāyaṇa* as emic, 34, 37–40;—as etic, 34; of Śūrpaṇakhā, 33; of Vālin, 26; *Uttarakāṇḍa* tells, of *rākṣasas* and Rāvaṇa, 16
homa (rite), 105

Homer, 3
honey-wine (*madhu*), 220, 394, 444, 542, 546, 647; drinking of, as sign of success, 529; as honey, 528; as honeycomb, 527; monkeys drink, 526–30; Rāma does not drink, 489; voided as urine, 529–30. *See also* Madhuvana
horn bow (*śārṅga*): of Viṣṇu, 709, 737–38
horse-faced fire: with mare's head, 399
House: of the Bhārgavas, 126; of Ikṣvāku, 51, 63, 95, 121–23, 329, 356, 432, 480, 515, 521, 532, 660, 711, 724, 756; of Janaka, 119, 454; of Kosala, 36, 690; of Kuśa, 86; of Rāghava, 74, 202, 216, 262, 316, 358, 433, 812; of Raghu, 537; of Rāvaṇa, 445
household priest. See *purohita*(s)
Hrī (goddess of modesty), 69, 315, 734, 853
Hṛśīkeśa. *See* Viṣṇu
Huhu (*gandharva* lord), 227
human effort: compared with fate, 706; destroys a person, 659; good for nothing, 110; one should devote oneself exclusively to, 659; righteousness as auxiliary to, 659; Triśaṅku attempts to overcome fate through, 110. *See also* manly effort
human flesh. *See* cannibalism; flesh of humans
hunchback: *rākṣasa* woman as, 462. *See also* Mantharā
hunter(s). *See* Niṣāda(s)
hunting: of Daśaratha, 198; of Ila, 833; of kings, 311–12, 372; of Kumbhakarṇa, 627; for golden deer, 312–13; of Lakṣmaṇa, 191; of men, 372; of Rāma, 72, 181–82, 312–13, 316, 480; of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 187, 342; of Rāvaṇa, 746; of Saudāsa, 812; for Sītā, 346, 399, 403–4; for Sītā and Rāvaṇa, 400, 413

ideals: of Aryan culture, 27–28
ideal wife (*pativratā*): Kausalyā acts against norms of, 23–24; Sītā as, 5, 22
Ikṣvāku (son of Manu, first king of Ayodhyā), 121–22, 251; Daṇḍa youngest son of, 827; fathers sons by means of sacrifices, 826–27; Nimi son of, 802; as son of Manu, 802, 826
Ikṣvākus, 71, 109–10, 132, *passim*; ancestor of Rāma, 36; Buddha as offshoot of lineage of, 36; Daśaratha as lord of, 60; genealogy of, 121–22, 251–52; lineage of, 16, 36, 121–22, 170, *Rāmāyaṇa* tale of descendants of, 58. *See also* House: of Ikṣvākus; House: of Rāghava
Ila: *aśvamedha* sacrifice of, 837; attains Brahmaloka, 837; boons of, 834; founds Pratiṣṭhāna, 837; Kardama father of, 833, 837; renounces kingdom, 836; transformed into woman, 833–34
Ilā: gives birth to Purūravas, 836; Budha transforms attendants of, into *kiṃpuruṣa* women, 835; propitiates Umā, 834; recovers manhood through *aśvamedha*, 837
Ila/Ilā: story of Śiva and Pārvatī and, 833–34; story of, and Budha, 834–37
Iliad, 3
illusion (*māyā*). *See* power(s) of illusion
Ilvala (*asura*): Agastya eats, 276; and Vātāpi killed by Agastya, 276; and Vātāpi story of, 275–76
inauspicious omens: appear at birth of Rāvaṇa, 29, 741;—during fight between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, 690; charioteer of Rāvaṇa turns back because of, 693; golden trees presage death, 318, 326, 341; Kāla brings about, 736; Lakṣmaṇa observes, 314; Mālyavān Bhārata observes observed in Ayodhyā, 207; observed in dreams, 205; presage abduction of Sītā, 314, 324, 330–31, 333; presage abandonment of Sītā, 794; presage death of king, 135; —of Rāvaṇa, 677; presage defeat of Akampana, 596;—of Dhūmrākṣa, 594; —of Khara, 289–91;—of Kumbhakarṇa, 621;—of Mahāpārśa, 679;—of Makarākṣa, 651;—of Prahasta, 600;—of Rāvaṇa, 695; presage destruction of Laṅkā, 474;—of *rākṣasas*, 37, 542, 571, 736–37; presage encounter with Kabandha, 342;—with Rāma Jāmadagnya, 125–26. *See also* auspicious omen(s); omen(s)

incarnation. See *avatāra* entries; co-*avatāras*
India, manuscript tradition in, 6
Indra (Mahendra, Śacī's lord, Śakra, Vāsava), 26, 32, 59, *passim*; abducts Hiraṇyakaśipu's wife, 466; *aśvamedha* of, 832–33; Bali Vairocana defeats, 81; becomes a peacock, 754; Brahmā asks, to recall his evil deed, 774; Brahmā asks Indrajit to release, 773–74;—gives arrow to, 278, 298; breaks Hanumān's jaw, 426; Bṛhaspati as *purohita* of, 723; carries off horse from Sagara's sacrifice, 91; casts Triśaṅku from heaven, 112; chariot of, 267–68, 770; crow son of, 493, 533; cuts off mountains' wings, 433; deforms Kabandha, 344; disguised as a *rākṣasa*, 91; earth suffers drought in absence of, 832; enemy of Rāvaṇa, 69; enters Diti's body, 99; father of Vālin, 71, 345, 368;—Jayanta, 770; fights Rāvaṇa, 771–72; foretells great feat of Rāma, 267–68; Gautama curses, 101, 774; gives arrow, 298;—arrow and quivers to Agastya, 278; food to Sītā, 422;—Hanumān epithet, 785; and gods, ask Viṣṇu to kill Vṛtra, 831;—, fear Māndhātṛ, 814; gods and seers purify, 77; golden garland of, 784; grants boon to Hanumān, 785–86;—to peacock, 754–55; grants Diti's request, 99; —Maināka immunity, 434; horses of, 267; in story of sword-wielding ascetic, 272; Indrajit defeats, 31–32, 772–73;—releases, 773–74; and the killing of Mantharā, 79; and the killing of Vṛtra, 77, 830–32; kills Maya, 412;—Puloman, 397;—sons of Diti, 98;—Vṛtra, 830–32; king as fourth part of, 264; Maruts and, engage Kṛttikās, 90; orders capture of Rāvaṇa, 772;—Vāyu to give Rāma golden necklace, 725;—pearl necklace, 725; performs *vaiṣṇava* sacrifice, 775; Rāma sees, 267; Rāma's killing of Tāṭakā pleases, 79; rapes Ahalyā, 774; requests Viṣṇu to kill Rāvaṇa, 768; searches for Indrajit on Airāvata, 772; seduces Ahalyā, 100–101; seeks Hanumān on Airāvata, 784; —Rāvaṇi on Airāvata, 772; seizes sovereignty of the worlds, 98; sends Rambhā to tempt Viśvāmitra, 115–16;—weapons, chariot, and Mātali to Rāma, 689; sin of *brahmahatyā* taints, 77, 832; as slayer of *daityas*, 831; smashes Diti's fetus, 99; spares Śunaḥśepa, 114; steals Ambarīṣa's sacrificial victim, 113; story of, and Diti; 97–99—, and Ahalyā, 100–102, 774–75; strikes Hanumān with *vajra*, 426, 784; *vajra* of, 339, 354, 449, *passim*; Vālin son of, 71, 345, 368; Vālin's gold necklace as gift from, 368–69; weapon-spell(s) of, 108 (Aindra), 628, 670; as wielder of *vajra*, 71, 157, 199, 210, 266, 268, 278, 456, 481, 506, 556, 617, 659–60, 697, 701, 722, 778, 832; as world guardian, 731
Indrajānu (monkey): arrival of, in Kiṣkindhā, 397
Indrajit (Rāvaṇi, Meghanāda), 5, 15, 506, *passim*; Aṅgada fights, 581, 583; arrows of, strike and fell monkeys, 641–43;—serpent sons of Kadrū become, 592; asceticism of, 661, 764, 773; asks Brahmā for immortality, 773; battles monkey army, 585, 641–43; binds and captures Hanumān, 14, 27, 32, 507–8; binds Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with serpent arrows, 24, 32, 584–85; birth of, 747; boons of, 583, 654, 764, 773–74; bow of, 507, 764; Brahmā asks, to release Indra, 773;—denies immortality to, 773;—grants boons to, 583, 773–74;—grants epithet, "Conqueror of Indra," 773;—grants powers to, 32; breaks army of gods, 669–770; chariot of, 507, 655, 764, 772; character synopsis of, 5, 15, 31–32; chariot of, destroyed by Aṅgada, 581; creates simulacrum of Sītā, 655–56; divine weapons and weapon-spells of, 508, 525, 584, 641–42, 661, 764; encounter of, with Hanumān, 506–9; exhorts Rāvaṇa, 640; fights and captures Hanumān, 14, 27, 32, 507–8; fights and captures Hanumān, recalled, 523; fights and captures Indrajit, 31–32, 772–73; fights Aṅgada, 581–82; —Vibhīṣaṇa, 667–68; Indra searches for, on Airāvata, 772; invisibility of, 5, 583–85, 654, 664, 772; kills six hundred and seventy million monkeys, 643; Lakṣmaṇa fights and kills, 22, 665–71; Meghanāda birth name of, 747; monkey army attacks, 662–63, 668; mount of, dolphin, 476; pierces Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with arrows, 584–85, 642, 654–55;—with serpent weapons, 583–85; power of illusion of, 5, 572, 583, 588–89, 592, 641, 655–56, 661–62, 729, 772; Rāma dispatches monkeys to find, 584; Rāma hears of death of, 671;—sends Lakṣmaṇa to fight, 661; Rāvaṇa hears of death of, 672; releases Indra, 774; reports death of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 586; sacrifice(s) (*agniṣṭoma*; *aśvamedha*; *bahusuvarṇaka*; *maheśvara*; *rājasūya*; *vaiṣṇava*) of, 32, 764; —

interrupted, 663;—to be interrupted, 660–61;—in Nikumbhilā grove, 641, 653–54, 657–58, 764; serpent weapons of, 24, 32, 583–85; serpent weapons of, Garuḍa drives off, 592; sets forth to capture Hanumān, 507; Śiva gives chariot to, as boon, 764;—power of illusion to, 764; power of illusion of, called *tāmasī*, 764
infanticide, 209. *See also* feticide; child(ren): killing of
inherent nature, 29, 554; as a translation of *dharma*, 46; force of, 378; of women, 701
inner apartments (*antaḥpuram*, women's quarters), 246, 784, 853; Agni testifies Sītā pure while in, 710; gazing upon, of another breach of propriety, 452; gendered politics of, 12; guard dogs of, 206; of Daśaratha, 64, 70, 143, 149, 151, 168, 173–74, 192–93;—women of, 173–74, 192–93, 246; Indrajit born in, 747; of Kausalyā, 151; of Rāma, 147, 311, 791, 853; of Rāvaṇa, 33, 327, 328, 450, 452, 466, 470, 471, 472, 572, 699, 765, 782; —Hanumān searches, 56, 452–53, 520, 531–32, 546; —for Sītā in, 327, 328, 532; —Vibhīṣaṇa enters to find Sītā, 705; of Romapāda, 63; of Vālin, 362, 367–68, 380, 391
Islam, 37, 39, 42
Islamic prince: Rāma as ideal of, 5n
iṣṭadevatā (chosen divinity), 40
itihāsa. *See* historical narrative

Jābāli (minister of Daśaratha), 64, 120, 203, 251, 255, 725, 821, 837, 841; encourages Rāma to accept kingship, 249–51
jackals. *See* inauspicious omens
Jāhnavī. *See* Ganges
Jain canon, 35
Jainism, 34, 37; cyclical time in, 37
Jain versions: of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 5n, 36
Jamadagni (one of the seven seers), 728
Jāmadagnya. *See* Rāma Jāmadagnya
Jāmbavān, 390, 415, 318, 788, *passim*; advises against Añgada's plan, 525;—Rāma to view Vibhīṣaṇa with suspicion, 550; and other monkeys struck down in battle, 643; Añgada discouraged by, from jumping, 424–25; as bear, 27; declares youthful prowess, 424; directs Hanumān to bring healing herbs, 27, 643–44, 688; dissuades monkeys from plan to rescue Sītā, 525; fights Mahāpārśva, 682; gives monkeys leave to drink honey-wine, 526; guards rear of army, 541; Hanumān seeks out, on battlefield, 643; as king of apes (*ṛkṣas*), 27, 540, 573–74, 590–91, 658, 658, 661–62, 672, 682, 788; member of southern search party, 400, 411; participates in Rāma's coronation, 725;—in Sugrīva's consecration, 380; questions Hanumān, 519; —Supārśva, 419; ; Rāma sends forth, to battle, 658, 661;—sends forth, to battle Kumbha, 648; renders aid to Indra, 559; smashes Mahānāda with boulder, 601; son of Gadgada, 563; struck in battle, 565; summons the monkeys, 518; troops of, attack *rākṣasa* army, 668; urges Hanumān to jump, 425–27
Jambumālin (*rākṣasa*) (1), 443, 506, 769; Hanumān fights and kills, 500–501
Jambumālin (*rākṣasa*) (2): Hanumān fights and kills, 581; Rāvaṇa orders out, 522
Janaka, 11, 21, 99, 336, *passim*; attends Daśaratha's *aśvamedha*, 65; birth of, from Nimi's body, 805; bow of, 83, 117–19; breaks siege of Mithilā, 118; etymology of name of, 805; finds Sītā while ploughing, 21, 118, 843; first king of Videha, 805; genealogy of, 122–23; grief of, 202; invites Daśaratha to Mithilā, 119–20; kills Sudhanvan, 123; sacrifice of, 83, 102, 117; Sītā daughter of (*see* Sītā)
Jānakī. *See* Sītā
Janamejaya, 200
janapada: as historical period, 35–37; meaning of word, 35

janapada(s): Aryan clans of, 35; of Kosala, 36
Janārdana. *See* Viṣṇu
Janasthāna, 52, 286, 288, *passim*; ascetics dwell in, 258; Jaṭāyus falls into, 422; located in Daṇḍaka forest, 828; Rāma battles army of fourteen thousand *rākṣasas* from, 292–94; Rāvaṇa dispatches eight *rākṣasas* to, 327–28; Sītā implores, for aid, 320; *See also* Daṇḍaka forest
Jātarūpaśila (mountain), 399
Jaṭāyus: age of, 322; ally of Kosalan court, 24; attempts to save Sītā, 13, 24, 52, 322–23; battle of, with Rāvaṇa described, 417–18; cremation of, 53, 342; death of, 341; falls into Janasthāna, 422; flies into sun, 418, 421–22; friendship of, with Daśaratha, 13, 279, 281, 417; funerary libations for, 342, 420; genealogy of creatures narrated by, 280–81; lineage of, 280–81; mortal wounding of, by Rāvaṇa, 13, 24, 323; on behavior toward others' wives, 321; Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa meet, 279–81; —see, mortally wounded, 340; Rāma asks, to protect Sītā, 312; Rāma tells, of Sītā's abduction, 340–41; rebukes Rāvaṇa 321–22; evidence of battle of, with Rāvaṇa, 337; fights Rāvaṇa, 322–23; reassures Rāma, 341; Saṃpāti and, make wager on Kailāsa, 421; Saṃpāti discovers death of, 417; Sītā's cries heard by, 321; story of, and Saṃpāti, 418, 421–22; younger brother of Saṃpāti, 14, 281, 416, 417
javelin(s) (*śakti*[*s*]), 47, 80, 289, *passim*; of Indra given to Rāma, 689; Lakṣmaṇa freed from, by herbs, 688; of Mālyavān pierces Viṣṇu, 740; of Maya given to Rāvaṇa, 746; Rāma removes and breaks Rāvaṇa's, 687;—shatters lance of Rāvaṇa with, of Indra, 691; of Rāvaṇa forged by Maya, 686;—strikes down Lakṣmaṇa, 686–87; Skanda as wielder of, 740; Skanda as wielder of, 740
jaw (hanu), Hanumān breaks, falling, 426, 561, 784; from *vajra*, 785
Jaya (father of Virādha), 266
Jayanta (minister of Daśaratha), 60, 204
Jayanta (son of Indra), fights Indrajit, 770; not slain, 775; Puloman carries from battlefield, 770; Puloman grandfather of, 770; son of Śacī, 770
jewel: Agastya gives, to Rāma, 824
jewelry, 58, 67, 564, *passim*; Anasūyā gives Sītā, 261; in disarray, 324; Hanumān sees, of Mandodarī, 450; Kaikeyī discards, 140, 142–43;—gives Mantharā, 139, 142; of Mantharā discards, 140;—shattered, 215; Rāvaṇa demands Sītā wear, 465–66; —promises, to Sītā, 327; of Sītā, 56, 224, 286, 791; in dissarray, 324;—dropped, 326–27, 357;—monkeys find, 357;—shown to Rāma, 357. *See also* hair ornament; ornament(s); signet ring
Judeo-Christian religions, 37
jumping. *See* leaping
jump of Hanumān. *See* leaping: of Hanumān
Jyotirmukha (monkey): son of Sūrya, 564
jyotiṣṭoma (rite), 68

Kabandha: describes Pampā, 346–47; description and history of, 343–44; directs Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Pampā, 347; —Rāma to Śabarī, 346–47; encounter of, with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 32, 53, 56, 343–47;—recalled, 460, 564, 627, 677, 697, 716, 717, 720; Lakṣmaṇa cremates, 345;—cuts off left arm of, 343; Rāma cuts of right arm of, 343
Kadrū/Kadrukā: mother of snakes, 280–81; sister of Surasā, 280–81; sons of, hold up the earth, 281; —become Indrajit's arrows, 592
Kaikasī: curse of Viśravas on, 28–30, 741; daughter of Sumālin, 734, 740–41; inspires Rāvaṇa with sibling envy, 29, 742; mother of Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, and Śūrpaṇakhā, 741; relationship of, with Viśravas, 28, 741
Kaikeyī: 811, 830, 845, *passim*; achieves desired goal, 265, 320, 332; Bharata reviles, 209–11; boon(s) of, 11, 23, 265, 316–17; boons of, as cause of misfortune, 417; character synopsis of, 24;

claims boons from Daśaratha, 143–44; Daśaratha accedes to demands of, 11, 143–45; Daśaratha reviles, 144–45, 175; daughter of Aśvapati, 141, 164, 210; eats celestial porridge, 70; exile of Rāma ordered by, 24; gives birth to Bharata, 71; informs Bharata of Daśaratha's death, 207–9; —Bharata of Rāma's exile, 208–9;—Rāma of impending exile, 150; Kausalyā reviles, 202; Lakṣmaṇa criticizes, 283; Mantharā incites, 11–12, 24, 138–43; Mantharā maidservant of, 11, 23, 24, 41; as middle mother, 265, 283; orders Rāma to wear barkcloth garments, 170–71; Rāma asks Bhadra about, 791; as Rāma's mother, 155, 186, 244, 283, 589, 791; receives boons from Daśaratha, 141; receives new brides, 128; recounts story of sons of Sagara to Daśaratha, 170; scheming of, 12, 23; story of, as cautionary tale, 24; travels to Citrakūṭa with other mothers, 219; as treacherous wife, 24
Kailāsa (mountain), 77, 89, 125, *passim*; description of, 405; Kubera lives on, 405, 545, 766; location of, in northern quarter, 405; Mandodarī and Rāvaṇa took enjoyment on, 701; Puṣpaka comes to Rāma from, 789; Rāvaṇa fights Kubera on, 29, 299, 545, 749–51—and yakṣas on, 299; Rāvaṇa goes to, 299, 545, 749–51; Saṃpāti and Jaṭāyus make wager on, 421; Sugrīva instructs Śatabali to search foothills of, 405; Viśravas tells Kubera to found a city on, 745
Kaiṭabha: and Madhu, 732, 759, 810, 817, 849
Kākutstha. *See* Rāma
Kakutstha (father of Raghu), 122, 252
Kāla (god of death), 74, 320, 330, *passim*; Bhayā as sister of, 732; Brahmā creator of rod of, 760; Brahmā sends, to Rāma, 848–49; brings about bad omens, 736–37; cannot be withstood, 338; created by creative power of illusion (*māyā*), 848–49; discus of, 108; Heti marries Bhayā sister of, 732; in guise of ascetic, 848; noose(s) of, 73, 80, 292, 298, 321, 323, 326, 512, 548, 574, 664, 760, 846; overtakes Rāvaṇa, 330; power of, 343, 587–88; Rāma's son in previous existence, 848–49; Rāvaṇa fights, 757–60; rod of, 749, 759–60, 769; *saṃvartāstra* (*saṃvarta*) as weapon of, 846. *See also* Dharmarāja; Kṛtānta; Mṛtyu; Vaivasvata; Yama
Kālakeyas (clan of *daityas*), 763; four hundred killed by Rāvaṇa, 761
Kālarātri, 583, 634; Sītā as, 511, 566
Kālindī (mother of Sagara), 252
Kālindī (river), 190, 398
Kali Yuga, 37, 38, 821. *See also* Tiṣya
Kalmāṣapāda. *See* Mitrasaha Saudāsa
kalpas. *See* cosmic cycles
kalpasūtra, 67
Kāma, god of love (Anaṅga, Kandarpa, Madana, Manmatha), 80, 115–16, 274, 284, 300–301, 315, 319, 445, 459, 464–65, 470, 483, 496, 521, 676, 735–36, 753, 777, 804, 827, 835, *passim*; arrows of, pierce Rāvaṇa, 301, 315, 319, 328; history of ashram of, 76–77; Śiva burns, 76
Kāmbojas: northern quarter as location of country of, 404; produced from wish-fulfilling cow, 107
Kampana (*rākṣasa*), 668; Aṅgada fights and kills, 647–48
Kāmpilyā (capital city of Brahmadatta), 86
Kāñcana (*purohita* of Śatrughna), 852
Kandarpa. *See* Kāma
Kaṇḍu (ascetic), advice of, 552; curses forest, 409; kills cow, 154; obeys father's commands, 154; son of, perishes in forest, 409
Kārāpatha (region), 847
Kardama Prajāpati: father of Ila, 833, 837; proposes *aśvamedha* dedicated to Śiva, 837
Karṇaprāvaraṇas (name of a people), 399
Kārtavīrya. *See* Arjuna Kārtavīrya
Kārtika: month of, 380
Kārtikeya/Kārttikeya. *See* Skanda

Kāśi: Pratardana lord of, 787: Purūravas king of, 804
Kaśyapa, 121, 134, 203, 251
Kāśyapa, 154, 791
Kaśyapa: Aditi wife of, 280, 744
Kāśyapa: brahman seer, 64, 120, 203, 725, 728 (Kaśyapa), 821, 841
Kaśyapa: Diti wife of, 98 (Kāśyapa), 280, 744. *See also* Mārīca Kāśyapa
Kaśyapa: one of the Prajāpatis, 280, 744
Kaśyapa: one of the seven seers, 728
Kāśyapa: patronymic of Ṛśyaśṛṅga, 62; performs Daśaratha's *aśvamedha*, 64
Kāśyapa: Rāma Jāmadagnya gives earth to, 126–28
Kāśyapa: son of, Vibhāṇḍaka, 61
Kaśyapa: son of Mārīci, 121, 251. *See also* Mārīci Kāśyapa
Kaśyapa: Vivasvant son of, 122, 251
Kaśyapa (brahman seer), 837
Kausalyā, 71, 76, 140, *passim*; asks to follow Rāma into exile, 23–24, 157–58; at death of Daśaratha, 201–2; blesses Rāma, 158–59; character synopsis of, 23–24; eats celestial porridge, 70; fasting of, 230; gives amulet to Rāma, 159; gives birth to Rāma, 71; goes to the forest with Bharata, 219; goes to Nandigrāma to meet Rāma, 721; grief of, 152–54, 157–59, 174–77, 188, 192, 195–96, 201–2, 209, 211–12, 223, 230, 242–44; ideal maternal figure, 23; implores Rāma to remain in Ayodhyā, 153–54; inner apartments of, 151; learns of Rāma's consecration, 135–36; meets Bharadvāja, 230; meets with Rāma on Mount Citrakūṭa, 243–44; mother of Rāma, 12, 23, 266, 332, *passim*; participates in *aśvamedha*, 67;—in Daśaratha's funerary rites, 213; Rāma greets, upon return, 723; —informs, of his impending exile, 152;—reminds, of wifely duty, 24, 157–58; receives new brides, 128; relationship of, with Daśaratha, 23; reviles Bharata, 211;—Daśaratha, 195–96;—Kaikeyī, 202; sees Rāma's offerings for Daśaratha, 243; Sumantra consoles, 195; Sumitrā consoles, 177; supports Daśaratha, 175–76
Kauśambī: Kuśāmba founds, 84
Kauśika (patronymic of Viśvāmitra). *See* Viśvāmitra
Kauśikī (river), 115, 398; rescued from Pātāla, 494; sister of Viśvāmitra, 86
kavi (seer or poet), 39
kāvya (poetry), 4
Kāvya, Uśanas. *See* Uśanas Kāvya
Kerala, 400
Kesarin (monkey): adoptive father of Hanumān, 397, 428, 783; Añjanā wife of, 425, 783; Añjanā, Vāyu, and, try to restrain, 786; arrival of, in 397; kills Śambasādana, 487; troop leader, 541, 560, 590
Keśava: sleeping of, 383. *See also* Viṣṇu
Keśinī (mother of Asamañja), 91
Ketumatī (mother of Dhūmrākṣa), 734
Khara (brother of Rāvaṇa; *rākṣasa*), 32–33; dispatches fourteen *rākṣasas*, 286;—fourteen thousand *rākṣasas*, 289; doom of, presaged by omens, 289–91; Dūṣaṇa general of, 289; Rāma admonishes, 296; Rāma and, mock each other, 297–98; Rāma battles and destroys army of, 12, 287–88, 291–94; —Khara, 52, 56, 295–98;—Khara recalled, 300–301, 303, 307, 314, 321–23, 327, 329, 460–61, 480, 547, 564–65, 585, 627, 677, 692, 697, 700, 716;—told about activities of, 258; Rāvaṇa sends, to Daṇḍaka forest, with Dūṣaṇa, 763–64; Śūrpaṇakhā taunts, 288; —tells, of death of fourteen *rākṣasas*, 288; —tells, of disfigurement, 286;—tells Rāma about, 284
kiṃkaras: Hanumān battles, 499–500
kiṃpuruṣas (class of semi-divine beings), 835

kiṃpuruṣa women: Budha transforms Ilā's attendants into, 835
kinnaras, 313
kinnara women, 71,143, 301; Budha transforms Ilā's attendants into, 835
Kīrātas (name of a people), 399
Kīrti (goddess of fame), 69, 315, 734
Kiṣkindhā, 14, 20, 24, *passim*; arrival of monkeys in, 397–98; as cave, 53, 373, 378–81, 385, 390, 561; departure of Sugrīva with Lakṣmaṇa from, 395; description of, 390–91; Lakṣmaṇa enters, 388; moral and ethical tone of, 14; Rāma will not enter, 379–80; summoning of monkeys to, 393–95
Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, 361–428; synopsis of, 13–14
Kosala: Ajātaśatru defeats *janapada* of, 36; Ayodhyā capital of, 10; consecration of Kuśa in, 851–52; country of, 58
Krathana. *See* Skanda
Krauñca (forest): Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa encounter Kābandha in, 342
Krauñca (mountain): birds pass through, 738; inaccessible opening in, 405
krauñca(*s*) (bird): killing of, by Niṣāda, 54; third path in sky, that of, 419
Kṛṣṇa: as *avatāra* (incarnation) of Viṣṇu, 21, 35, 38, 40; Rāma as, 709, 710
Kṛtānta, 153. *See also* Dharmarāja; Mṛtyu; Vaivasvata; Yama
Kṛta Yuga, 21, 54, 729, 753–54, 808, 821, 826, 843; mountains had wings during, 433; sons of Diti powerful in, 97
Kṛśāśva's sons: divine weapons, 75; Indra tells Viśvāmita to bestow on Rāma, 79; take on form at will, 81; Viśvāmitra intones mantras for, 81
Kṛttikās (Pleiades): provide milk for Skanda, 90
kṣatriyadharma (warrior code), 20
kshatriya(s), 11, 54, 84, *passim*: ascetics in Tretā Yuga, 821; born from the breast of Manu, 280; bow of, compared to kindling, 272; code of, inapropos to forest life, 272; come to be of equal power to brahmans in Kṛta and Tretā Yugas, 821; code of, 127; eating of five- clawed animals by, 370; extermination of, 127; Ikṣvākus as, 266; in list of four social classes, 40, 65, 219, 240, 280, 821, 842; power of brahmans greater than, 106, 108–9; Rāma asks Śambūka if he is, 822; Rāvaṇa oppresses, 752; role of, in the *yugas*, 821; Sītā's oath witnessed by, 842
Kubera Vaiśravaṇa: acquires Puṣpaka from Brahmā, 446; ashram of, 730–31; austerities of, 730–31, 748; becomes a lizard, 754; birth of, 730; Brahmā gives Puṣpaka to, 731;—grants boons to, 731; —makes world guardian, 731; curses Tumburu as Virādha, 266–67; curses Tumburu to become Virādha because of Rambhā, 267; Devavarṇinī mother of, 730; dwelling of, 468;—built by Viśvakarman, 405;—in Lañkā, 437, 731;—on Mt. Kailāsa, 405; evacuates Lañkā, 745; founds Lañkā, 731; friendship of, with Śiva, 748; genealogy of, 729–31; grants boon to Hanumān, 786; —to lizard, 755; half-brother of Rāvaṇa, 29, 74, 318–19, 329, 341, 637, 674, 700, 742, 744, 747, 754, 767, 789; heavenly forest of, 227; history and etymology of epithet Ekākṣipiñgala, 748; king of *yakṣas*, 405; left eye of burned by gazing at Pārvatī, 748; mount of, elephant Sārvabhauma, 405; pleases Śiva, 748; Puṣpaka belongs to, 731, 742; Rāvaṇa fights and defeats, and *yakṣas*, 29, 299, 749–51;—recalled, 545;—conquers, 299, 446, 545, 749–51;—envious of, 29; —seizes Puṣpaka of, 318, 751; Rāvaṇa's enmity with, 29, 742, 744–51; son of Viśravas, 730; Viśravas tells, to found a city on Kailāsa, 745; as world guardian, 545, 731
kuliñgas: first path in sky, that of, 419
Kumāra. *See* Skanda
Kumbha (son of Kumbhakarṇa), 604, 647, 668; fights Añgada and Dvivida, 648; Sugrīva fights and kills, 649–50;—recalled, 751

Kumbhakarṇa (brother of Rāvaṇa): agrees to attack Rāma and the monkeys, 617; Aṅgada claims, is scarecrow, 621; army of, fights army of monkeys, 620–27; assaults gods, 771; austerities of, 742; birth of, 28–29, 741; Brahmā curses, to perpetual sleep, 609–10, 614;—orders Sarasvatī to take over speech of, 31, 743–44;—tricks under pretext of boon, 743–44; brother of Rāvaṇa, 15; cannibalism of, 743; captures and releases Sugrīva, 625–26; cave of, as dwelling, 610; characters synopsis of, 31; comically grotesque figure, 5; craves flesh, 626; decimates monkey army, 624; devours allies, 626; —monkeys, 624;—seven *apsarases*, 743; —thousands of beings, 613; discourse of, on statecraft (*nītiśāstra*) to Rāvaṇa, 31, 615–16, 619; drenches earth with flesh, 624; driven by fate, 621; dwelling of, sleeping chamber, 610, 747; episode of, 610–28; feats of, 613–14; fights and dazes Hanumān, 623–34; Gavākṣa fights, 623; gods remind Brahmā of crimes of, 743;—stop Brahmā from granting boon to, 743; hunting of, 627; inauspicious omens follow, 621; intoxication of, 613–14; Kaikasī mother of, 741; Kumbha and Nikumbha sons of, 647; Mahodara rebukes, 617–19; monkeys terrified of, 613, 621–22; Rāma fights and kills, 626–28; Rāvaṇa orders awakening of, 610; sleep of, 31, 610, 744, 747; Sugrīva tears off ears and nose of, 625–26; Vajrajvālā wife of, 746–47; Viśravas father of, 28–29; waking of, 610–11; Yūpākṣa informs, of siege of Laṅkā, 612
Kumbhīnasī (1): daughter of Sumālin, 734
Kumbhīnasī (2): Analā mother of, 765, 808; Madhu abducts, 764–65; wife of Madhu, 545, 765, 808; Viśvāvasu father of, 808
Kuñjara (mountain): Viśvakarman builds palace for Agastya on, 401
Kurus: northern quarter location of country of, 404; vedic clan and region of, associated with *Mahābhārata*, 35, 36, 227, 233, 404, 406
Kuśa (companion of Rāma), 791
Kuśa (son of Brahmā/Prajāpati): attains Brahmaloka, 86; father of Kuśanābha, 103; founder of Kauśambī, 84; Viśvāmitra descendant of, 86
Kuśa (son of Rāma), 6, 17, 18–19; consecration of, in Kosala, 851–52; lives with mother (Sītā) in exile, 6; Rāma founds Kuśavatī for, 852;—recognizes as son 10, 842; recites *Rāmāyaṇa*, 6, 10, 17, 19, 57–58, 839–41; Sītā gives birth to, 17, 813; Vālmīki gives amulet to, 813;—names, 813; wears barkcloth garments, 840. *See also* disciple(s): of Vālmīki
kuśa (type of grass),98, 101, 137, *passim*; Vālmīki creates amulet for Kuśa from, 813
Kuśadhvaja (father of Vedavatī), 752
Kuśadvaja (brother of Janaka), 121
Kuśāmba (son of Kuśa): founds Kauśambī, 84
Kuśanābha, 84–87; father of Gādhi, 86, 104; founds Mahodaya, 84; hundred daughters of, 84–86; son of Kuśa, 84, 103–4
Kuśāvatī: Rāma founds, for Kuśa, 852
kūṭaśālmalī tree, 399. See also *śālmalī*

Lake Mānasa. *See* Mānasa
Lake Pampā. See *Pampā*
Lakṣmaṇa, *passim*; accepts advice of Tārā, 393; accompanies Rāma into exile, 11, 52, 174–723;—on journey with Viśvāmitra, 9, 75–129; Agastya tells Rāma and, to go to Pañcavaṭī, 279; alarm of Sugrīva at anger of, 389; Aṅgada as mount of, 541; anger of, at exile of Rāma, 11, 151;—toward Bharata, 266;—toward Sugrīva, 387–90, 392; announces arrival of Durvāsas, 850; annoints Vibhīṣaṇa as king of the *rākṣasas*, 552; apologizes to Sugrīva, 393; arrives at Lake Pampā, 351; ascetics show hospitality to Rāma and, 264–65; asks and is denied permission to exterminate *rākṣasas*, 655; asks to use weapon-spell of Brahmā, 655; assigned to breach Laṅkā's northern gate, 574; begs permission to fight Rāvaṇa, 605;—of Rāma to take him to forest, 164–65; beheads

Rāvaṇa's charioteer, 685–86; bids farewell to his mother, 172; birth of, 71; breaks Virādha's left arm, 266; brings wood for Jaṭāyus' cremation, 342; builds a pyre for fire ordeal of Sītā, 708;—hut for Rāma and Sītā in Pañcavaṭī, 282; challenges Indrajit, 664; chides Rāma for fainthearted speech, 266, 689; childhood of, 72; claims the weak and cowardly submit to fate, 156; co-*avatāra* with brothers, 4, 10, 22, 70–71, 608; conciliates Sugrīva, 393; consecrates Vibhīṣaṇa as king of Lañkā, 702–3; consoles Rāma, 335, 338–40, 381–82, 386, 658–60, 800; cremates Kabandha, 345; criticizes Kaikeyī, 283; cuts off Kabandha's left arm, 343; cuts Rāvaṇa's javelin to pieces, 686; dejection of, 799; delivers critique of *dharma* (righteousness), 658–60; departs from Kiṣkindhā with Sugrīva, 395; describes ascetic life of Bharata, 283;—winter season, 282–83; descriptions of, 22, 354, 561; desolate, 153, 155, 799; on destiny, 339; devotion of, to Rāma, 72, 355; diverts Śūrpaṇakhā to Rāma, 285; dons the clothing of an ascetic, 170; dwells apart from Rāma for a year in Añgadīya, 847; embraces fainting Rāma, 658; emotional foil to Rāma, 11, 22; enters abode of Sugrīva, 391; —Daṇḍaka forest with Rāma, 12, 263–64; —heaven in earthly body, 851;—yogic trance, 851; exhortation of, 381, 386–87; fights Rāvaṇa, 607–8; fights and kills Atikāya, 638–40;—Indrajit, 665–71; —Virūpākṣa (son of Rāvaṇa), 581; finds Rāma in forest, 331; fourth part of Viṣṇu, 851 (*see also* Lakṣmaṇa: co–*avatāra*); Garuḍa heals wounds of Rāma and, 592; gives away his wealth, 166;—*gajapuṣpī* to Sugrīva, 364–65; gods grant boon to, 817; grief of, 313, 482, 491, 497, 658, 765–96, 799–800; guards door for Rāma, 848; —Sītā, 312; Hanumān able to lift, 608; —introduces Rāma and, to Sugrīva, 356; hears of Durvāsas' prophecies from Sumantra, 799;—recitation of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 58;—tales of Nṛga, Nimi and Yayāti from Rāma, 800–807; holds regalia for Rāma's planned consecration, 148; ideal younger brother, 5, 22; Indrajit binds Rāma and, with serpent weapons, 24, 32, 584–85; Indrajit reports death of Rāma and, 586; joins Rāma in battling Rāvaṇa, 685–86; Kabandha freed from curse by;—learns of Rāghavas' identities from, 344;—relates history to Rāma and, 344;—seizes Rāma and, 343; Kaikeyī orders, to wear barkcloth garments, 170–71; kills Indrajit, 670–71;—Mahāpārśva, 715; learns of Rāma's planned consecration as prince regent, 135–36; leaves Ayodhyā with Rāma, 173;—Sītā unprotected, 13, 314, 331; lives with Rāma in cave during rainy season, 380–81; marries Ūrmilā, 123–25; monkeys announce arrival of, 388;—and, interrupt Indrajit's sacrifice, 662–63; mutilates Śūrpaṇakhā, 12, 285–86; on nature of women, 314; only human ally of Rāma, 24; opposes Rāma's exile, 153; paired constantly with Rāma, 10, 72; pierces Kumbhakarṇa with arrows, 626; Rāma and, encounter Virādha, 265–67; —break Virādha's arms, 266;—meet Jaṭāyus, 279–81;—meet Sugrīva, 391; —rescue Sītā, 267;—tease Śūrpaṇakhā, 285; Rāma banishes, 19, 851–52;—calms, 387–88;—confides in, 187–88;—could never find brother or companion like, 589; —directs, to find Sugrīva, 350;—dwells with, in Pañcavaṭī, 12, 281–84;—goes to Pañcavaṭī with;—279;—grieves for (*see* Lakṣmaṇa: Rāma laments for);—informs, of intention to abandon Sītā, 792–94; —instructs, to arrange *aśvamedha*, 837–38; —laments for, 22, 589–90, 688;—lectures, on righteousness, 154;—offers to share sovereignty with, 136;—orders banishment of, 850;—orders, to abandon Sītā, 794–97;—orders, to guard door, 848; —prevents, from exterminating all *rākṣasas*;—rebukes, 331–33;—sends, into hiding with Sītā, 291;—sends, to warn Sugrīva, 386–87;—tells, to call off the consecration, 155;—and, visit Agastya, 52,276–79;—and, visit Agastya's brother, 52, 275–76; Rāvaṇa pierces with Brahmā's javelin, 608;—strikes down, with javelin, 686–87;—unable to lift, 608; reaches Pampā, 348; recalls he is inconceivable portion of Viṣṇu, 608; recommends *rājasūya* to Rāma 830; reconciliation of, with Sugrīva, 393; refusal of, to gaze on Sītā, 21; rejects Śūrpaṇakhā, 285; rejoins battle between Rāma and Kumbhakarṇa, 626; relationship of, with Rāma, 72, 493–94, 589; reports to Rāma on abandonment of Sītā, 800; resists Sītā's request to follow Rāma, 313–14; reviles Daśaratha, 153;—Sugrīva, 391–92; rides on Añgada, 540; Śabarī welcomes Rāma and, 348; sacrifices life for Rāma and family, 22, 40; saves Vibhīṣaṇa, 686; second life breath of Rāma, 2, 22, 72, 136, 561; sees inauspicious omens, 314; senses Rāma's intentions, 708;

sets out for battle with Indrajit, 662;—for Mount Ṛśyamūka, 352; shoots arrows at Rāvaṇa, 683; shreds Rāvaṇa's battle standard, 685; Sītā accuses, of treachery, 13, 313–14;—laments for Rāma and, 587–88;—left alone in ashram by, 314;—left alone in ashram by recalled, 356;—rebuked by, 314;—requests, to rescue Rāma, 313;—sees Rāma and, wounded, 587;—sends, to rescue Rāma, 313; son Añgada consecrated in Añgadīya, 847; son Candraketu consecrated in Candrakāntā, 847; son of Daśaratha and Sumitrā, 122; and Sugrīva accept advice of Vībhīṣaṇa, 553; Sumantra consoles, 799; Sumitrā instructs, on conduct, 173;—urges submission to Rāma, 172–73; Śūrpanakha describes, to Rāvaṇa, 301; Suṣeṇa frees, with healing herbs, 27, 688; suspects golden deer is a *rākṣasa*, 311; Sutīkṣṇa directs Rāma and, to visit ashrams of Agastya and Agastya's brother, 275; tells Rāma exemplary story of Indra, 830–33; terror of Añgada at arrival of, 388–89; threatens to slay Bharata and Kaikeyī, 234–35; twin brother of Śatrughna, 71; urges Rāma to defy order of exile, 156—to kill Rāvaṇa, 688–89; —to proceed with consecration, 156; urges search for Sītā, 335; virtues of, extoled by Guha to Bharata, 221–22; visits Śarabhañga, 268;—Sutīkṣṇa, 269–71, 274–75; vital glow of, 586, 589; vital points (vitals) of, pierced by Indrajit's arrows, 584–85; vows to accompany Rāma into exile, 153, 164–65;—to avert fate by manly action, 156;—to dethrone Daśaratha, 157; warns Rāma of arrival of Bharata's army, 234–36; wears barkcloth garments, 11, 482, 485

Lakṣmī (goddess of wealth and fortune), 315, 445, 561, 568, 710, 843

Lamba (mountain): Hanumān's leap to, 436–37, 439; Lañka located on, 439. *See also* Ariṣṭa; Trikūṭa

lament: of abducted women, 762–63; of Bharata for Daśaratha, 208, 213–14; of brahman for child, 820; of Daśaratha for Rāma, 52, 56, 144, 171, 173, 175–77, 194–95; dead person derives no benefit from, 378; of Hanumāṇ for Sītā, 460; of Kausalyā for Daśaratha, 202, 211;—Rāma, 153–54, 176–77, 192; of Mandodarī for Rāvaṇa, 33, 700–701, 716; of *rākṣasa* women for Rāvaṇa, 699–700; of Rāma for his exile, 187–88;—Jaṭāyus, 53, 56, 340–41;—Lakṣmaṇa, 89–90, 688;—Sītā, 13, 56, 334–36, 341, 351–52, 357, 385, 543–44; of Rāvaṇa for Indrajit, 672–73; —Kumbhakarṇa, 629;—*rākṣasas*, 677–78; of Sītā, 473–75, 477–78, 567, 587–88, 674; —over simulacra of Rāma's head and bow, 566–67; of Tārā for Vālin, 56, 374–77, 379; true men do not, 629; of Vibhīṣaṇa for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 591; of wives of Daśaratha, 213, 217;—the *rākṣasas*, 676–78; —the townsmen, 180–81;—Vālin, 374–75

lance(s) (*śūla*[*s*]), *passim*; history of Lavaṇa's, 808–9, 814; Lavaṇa fights Śatrughna with, 814–17; of Lavaṇa returns to Śiva (Rudra), 817; Rāma shatters Rāvaṇa's, with javelin of Indra, 691; Śiva grants, to Madhu as boon, 808, 811

langur(s) (*Semnopithecus entellus*), 189, 280, 381, 396, 712; Gavākṣa as king of, 397; gods take birth as, 70–71; numbers of, 393, 559, 580, 583; *ṛkṣas* identified as, 47

Lañkā, 4, 13, 15, *passim*; compared to a woman, 437–38, 440;—to Amarāvatī, 319; description of, 319, 437–50, 539, 575–76, 734; Hanumān arrives at, 437, 439;—attacks and burns, 14, 27, 514–15, 540, 544, 782–83;—fights *rākṣasas* in, 782–83;—leaps to, 429–37, 782;—searches, 437, 439–59, 513, 782; impregnability of, 440, 474, 539, 734, *passim*; inauspicious omens in, 736–37; Kubera (Vaiśravaṇa) dwells in, 437, 731;—evacuates, 745;—on peak of Trikūṭa (=Lamba), 437, 439, 538, 575; monkeys burn, 645–46;—lay siege to 579–80; Nala and monkeys build bridge to, 554–55; number of *rākṣasas* in, 392; *rākṣasas* abandon, 731, 740, 744;—flee to, 737–38, 740;—live in, 731, 734–36, 738–740, 744–45; Rāma crosses bridge to, with army, 555;—positions monkey chiefs to attack, 577–78;—tells Vibhīṣaṇa to rule, 789; Rāvaṇa brings abducted women to, 763;—positions *rākṣasa* chiefs to defend, 572;—takes possession of, 744–46;—takes Sītā to, 328; Sītā predicts doom of, 474; Śūrpaṇakhā goes to, 298–99; Vibhīṣaṇa consecrated as de facto king of, 14, 702–3; Viśvakarman builds, 437, 731, 734

Lava (son of Rāma), 6, 17, 18–19; consecration of, in Śrāvatī, 851–52; lives with mother (Sītā) in exile, 6; Rāma founds Śrāvatī for, 852;—recognizes as son 10, 842; recites *Rāmāyaṇa* with Kuśa,

6, 10, 17, 19, 57–58, 839–41; Sītā gives birth to, 17, 813; Vālmīki gives amulet to, 813;—names, 813; wears barkcloth garments, 840. *See also* disciple(s): of Vālmīki
Lavaṇa: arrow that kills, enters Rasātala, 817; cannibalism of, 814; Cyavana asks Rāma for protection from, 17–18, 808–9;—tells story of Māndhātṛ and, 814–15; disregards ancestors of Śatrughna and Rāma, 815; fights and kills Māndhātṛ, 814–15; history of, 808–9; lance of, 809, 811, 814–17; Madhu gives lance to, 809, 811; oppresses ascetics, 809; Rāma sends Śatrughna to kill, 17–18, 809–11; Śatrughna fights and kills, 17–18, 23, 32, 815–17; story of, 17–18, 809–17
leaping: of Hanumān, 14, 53, 56, 429–37, 516–18, 547, 561, 706;—to mountain of healing herbs, 644–45, 688;—to sun, 426–27; of ocean, discussion of, by monkeys, 423–25;—from Mount Ariṣṭa by Hanumān, 516–18;—from Mount Mahendra by Hanumān, 429–37;—Vāyu assists in, 432;—preparation by Hanumān for, 427–28, 516–17; prowess of monkeys in, 424–25
legacy of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, 41–43
lifting of mountain by Rāvaṇa, 30, 752
lineage: and adventures of Rāvaṇa, 74, 728–82; of Aṅgirasas, 786; of Bhṛgus, 786; of Daśaratha, 121–22; Heti founds, of *rākṣasas*, 732; of Ikṣvāku, Brahmā sires, 121, 251; of Janaka 122–23; of Jaṭāyus, 280–81; of Kubera, 729–31; of Paulastya, 74; of *rākṣasas*, 740–42; of royal epic dynasties. *See also* genealogy; Lunar Dynasty; Solar Dynasty; *vaṃśa*(*s*); *vaṃśāvali*(*s*)
liṅga: Rāvaṇa worships, 30, 776
lives, previous. *See* birth(s): reaping consequences of previous; reincarnation
lizard: eating of, by brahmans and kshatriyas, 370; Kubera becomes, 754;—grants boon to, 755; Nṛga cursed to become, 801–2
Lohamukhas (name of a people), 399
lord of Śacī. *See* Indra
love in separation, 351–52, 382–83
Lunar Dynasty (Candravaṃśa), 36

Madana. *See* Kāma
Mādhava. *See* Viṣṇu
Mādhavī (earth goddess), 19, 843. *See also* Dharaṇī; Vasudhā
mādhavī (type of creeper), 352
Madhu: and Kaiṭabha, 732, 759, 810, 817, 849; Viṣṇu as crusher of, 137;—killer of, 128, 709
Madhu (*asura* or *dānava* lord): as ally of Rāvaṇa, 765–66; bestows lance on Lavaṇa, 808–9; carries off and marries Kumbhīnasī (2) 545,764–65; Cyavana tells story of, 808; father of Lavaṇa, 808, intent on righteousness, 808; receives lance from Rudra, 808, 811; Śatrughna consecrated in city of, 809–10
madhu (type of wine), 390. *See also* honey-wine
Madhupurī (city of Madhu). *See* Madhurā
Madhurā: Rāma sends messengers to, 852; Rāma sends Śatrughna back to, 18, 820; Śatrughna founds, as capital of the Śūrasenas, 18, 23, 817–18
Madhusūdana. *See* Viṣṇu
Madhuvana (honey-wine grove) (1): guarded by Dadhimukha, 526; Ṛkṣarajas prohibits entrance into, 528; southern search party destroys, 14, 525–32; Sugrīva protects, 526–31
Madhuvana (honey-wine grove) (2): Lavaṇa kills Māndhātṛ in, 814–15; the region around Madhurā, 809, 814
Magadha: Ajātaśatru king of, 36; region of, 84, 399
Māgadhī (river), 84
magic. *See* power(s) of illusion
magical weapons. *See* weapon(s); weapon-spells

Mahābharata, 4, 21, 21n, 35–39; *adhyāyas* (chapters) of, 9n; comparison of *Rāmāyaṇa* with, 20; fraternal conflict as theme of, 26; "Great Tale of the Bhāratas," 36; as history, 37; as *itihāsa*, 4; metrical style of, 8; number of casualties in war in, 39; relationship of, to *Bhagavadgītā*, 13, 35; in religious history of Hinduism, 40; sister epic of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 47; takes place in Dvāpara Yuga, 38; theme of, 20; as Vaiṣṇava work, 35
Mahādeva. *See* Śiva
Mahākapāla (*rākṣasa* general): Rāma fights and kills, 291–93
Mahāpadma (one of the elephants who support the earth), 92, 635, 776. *See also* Padma
Mahāpārśva (minister of Rāvaṇa): Añgada fights and kills, 682–83; joins assault on the gods, 769; riddles Añgada, Jāmbavān, and Gavākṣa with arrows, 682; among ministers who kill and devour ministers of Arjuna Kārtavīrya, 777–78; wreaks havoc on Añgada's forces, 682
Mahāpārśva (younger brother of Rāvaṇa): Ṛṣabha fights and kills, 635
mahāprasthāna (departure from the world): of Rāma recounted, 853–85
Mahārāja (Great King), as title, 35
Mahāsena. *See* Skanda
mahāyuga (great cosmic cycle), 37
Mahendra (god). *See* Indra
Mahendra (mountain), 542; Hanumān climbs and crushes, 427–30;—leaps from, 429–36; Hanumān's association with, 517; placed on southern shore by Agastya, 401; *vidyādharas* fly up from, 430
Maheśvara: sacrifices to, 395, 744, 754, 764; *See also* Śiva
māheśvara (sacrifice): of Indrajit (Meghanāda), 764; of Marutta, 744
Mahodara (minister of Rāvaṇa): advises Kumbhakarṇa to seek Rāvaṇa's advice, 612; battles sons and grandsons of Varuṇa, 762; charges Añgada, 633; fights Sugrīva, 681–82; mounts the elephant Sudarśana, 630; Nīla kills, 634; one of Rāvaṇa's six ministers, 749, 776–78; proposes a ruse to induce Sītā to submit, 618–19; rebukes Kumbhakaraṇa, 617–19
Mahodaya (brahman): Viśvāmitra curses, 111
Mahodaya (city), 111; Kuśanābha founds, 84
Maināka (mountain) (1): addresses Hanumān, 433; barrier against *asuras*, 432; granted immunity by Indra, 434; Hanumān caresses, 517; encounter of Hanumān with, 432–34; hidden beneath the ocean, 432; Indra grants immunity to, 434; resting place for Hanumān, 432–34; rises out of ocean, 432; Vāyu saves, 433
Maināka (mountain) (2): home of the horse- faced women, 405; lies beyond Mount Krauña, 405, palace of Maya located on, 405
Mainda (monkey troop leder), 380, 390, 440, *passim*; arrives in Kiṣkindhā, 397; boon of, from Brahmā, 525; cut down in battle, 565; declares prowess in jumping, 424; drinks nectar of immortality, 525, 560; fights and kills Vajramuṣṭi, 581–82; in southern search party, 400, 411; invulnerability of, 525; Kaikeyī embraces, 722; knows good and bad policy, 550; number of troops of, 397; participates in Sugrīva's consecration, 380; Rāma gives gifts to, 742; son of the Aśvins, 397, 525, 564; takes picket duty, 543. *See also* Dvivida
maireya wine. *See* wine: *maireya*
Maithilī. *See* Sītā
Makarākṣa (son of Khara): inauspicious omens of, 651; Rāma fights and kills, 652–53; Rāvaṇa orders to command army, 651; reviles Rāma as killer of Khara, 652
Malaya (mountain[s]) (1): Agastya seated on, 401, Hanumān announces Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Sugrīva on, 356;—swears by, 489, 496; monkey army marches through, 542; southern mountain of spices, 227, Vālin fights and kills Dundubhi in cave of, 408
Malaya (mountain[s]) (2): Hanumān tears off summit of, 625;—sees, on approach to Lañkā, 436; of Lañkā, 496, 536

Mālin (great uncle of Rāvaṇa): account of, 734–39; austerities of, 733; battles gods, 738–49; boons of, 733, 735–36; bows of, 738; Devavatī mother of, 733; fights Garuḍa, 738–39; sons of, become ministers of Vibhīṣana, 734; strikes Garuḍa with mace, 738; Viṣṇu fights and kills, 738–39. *See also* Mālyavān; Sukeśa: sons of, attack the world of the gods; Sumālin
Malla: Rāma founds Candrakāntā in, 847
Mālyavān (great uncle of Rāvaṇa), 765; account of, 734–39; as Analā daughter of, 734; as Analā, granddaughter of, 765; austerities of, 733; battles gods, 739–40; boons of, 733, 735–36; chides Viṣṇu, 739; Devavatī mother of, 733; discourse on statecraft of, 570–71; eldest son of Sukeśa, 735; flees to Laṅkā, 739; foretells destructions of *rākṣasas*, 570–72; Garuḍa drives off, 740; husband of Sundarī, 734; lectures Rāvaṇa. 571; paternal uncle of Rāvaṇa's mother, 570; Rāvaṇa accuses, of treachery and humiliates him, 572; strikes Viṣṇu with lance, 740; urges Rāvaṇa to make peace with Rāma, 570–72; Viṣṇu pierces, with javelin, 740. *See also* Mālin; Sukeśa: sons of, attack the world of the gods; Sumālin
Mālyavān (mountain): meeting of Sugrīva on, with Rāma, 395–96; Rāma lives on, 382. *See also* Prasravaṇa
Mānasa (lake): Brahmā creates, 77; etymology of name of, 77; flooding of, 747; *haṃsas* yearn to live on, 382; and Saramā, 747
Mānasa (mountain), 405
Māṇḍakarṇi (ascetic): asceticism of, 274; creates Pañcāpsaras, 274
Mandākinī (river), 269; description of, 233–34. *See also* Ganges
Mandara (mountain), 193, 318, 388, *passim*; gods and demons churn, 97–99, 469, 620; Hanumān swears by, 489; monkeys summoned from, 394; Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā gives birth on, 732; twin peaks of, 449; Viśvakarman grants Nala's mother boon on, 554
Māṇḍavī: marriage of, to Bharata, 125
Mandehas (name of a clan of *rākṣasas*), 399
Māndhātṛ (ancestor of Rāma), 122, 252; Indra and gods fear, 814; Lavaṇa fights and kills, 814–15; punishes mendicant, 371
Mandodarī (wife of Rāvaṇa), 33; diverts Rāvaṇa, 521; gives birth to Meghanāda Indrajit, 747; Hanumān mistakes, for Sītā, 450; Hemā mother of, 746; laments Rāvaṇa, 33, 700–701, 716; marriage of, to Rāvaṇa, 746; Maya father of, 746
Māṇibhadra/Māṇicara (*yakṣa*): strikes down Dhūmrākṣa in battle, 750
manly effort, 156, 494, 659, 706 (action). *See also* human effort
Manmatha. *See* Kāma
Mantharā (daughter of Virocana): Indra kills, 79
Mantharā (maidservant of Kaikeyī), 23, 41, 214, *passim*: incites Kaikeyī, 11–12, 24, 138–43; instigates Rāma's exile, 138–42; Śatrughna assaults, 23, 215
Mantrapāla (minister of Daśaratha), 60
Manu: builder of Āyodhyā, 58; Ikṣvāku son of, 802, 826–27; son of Vivasvant (Vaivasvata), 121, 251
manuscript(s): evidence from, as basis for emendations, 5n; materials of, 8; of northern recension, 9n; of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 7–8; *sargas* in, 45; tradition of in India, 6; perishability of, 8
Mārīca (*rākṣasa* minister of Rāvaṇa): 56; abandons golden deer form at death, 312–13; admonishes Rāvaṇa, 304; agrees to command of Rāvaṇa, 309; attempts to dissuade Rāvaṇa, 52, 304–7; becomes a golden deer, 13, 32, 309–313;—recalled 720; captivates Sītā, 13; character of, 32; cries out for help in Rāma's voice, 13, 313; description of, as golden deer, 309–10; fasting of, 303; fears Rāma, 307; feasts on flesh of seers, 305; fights *yakṣas*, 749–50; flees battle, 750–51; flies to Rāma's ashram with Rāvaṇa, 309; foretells destruction of Rāvaṇa and *rākṣasas*, 306, 309; Lakṣmaṇa suspects true identity of, deer as, 311; lures Rāma off, 13, 32, 52, 309–10, 312; obstructs Viśvāmitra's sacrifice with Subāhu, 10, 73–74, 82–83, 306; one of Rāvaṇa's six ministers, 744,

749, 751, 769, 776–78; power of illusion of, 325–26; praises Rāma, 304; Rāma kills, 13, 32, 56, 312–13;—kills recalled, 627, 697, 717, 720;—pursues 13, 312;—stuns, 10, 83, 306;—vows to capture, for Sītā, 311–12; Rāvaṇa admonishes, 307–8;—asks, for aid, 13, 52, 303;—orders, to become golden deer, 303–4, 308;—orders, to obstruct sacrifices, 74;—rejects counsel of, 307–8;—recounts previous encounter with Rāma, 305–7;—tells, of killing of Khara, Dūṣaṇa, and Triśiras, 303;—tells, plan to abduct Sītā, 303–4;—threatens, 308;—visits, 303; recalls past encounters with Rāma, 305–7; roams Daṇḍaka forest, 30; Saṃyodhakaṇṭaka fells, 749; son of Tāṭakā, 78; strikes fear into all the world, 305; takes forms at will, 13, 330; Tāṭakā gives birth to, 78; transformed into *rākṣasa* by Agastya's curse, 78

Mārīca Kāśyapa: husband of Diti 98, like Rāma, has every virtue of a son 132

Marīci: ancestor of Rāma, 121–22; father of Kaśyapa, 121, 251, 280; one of the Prajāpatis, 280; son of Brahma,121, 251

Marīci: a city in the western quarter, 402

marīcīpas (class of ascetics), 268, 302, 303

marriage: Bhaga as lord of, 734; of Bharata to Māṇḍavī, 123–25; of Bhayā to Heti, 732; of Devavarṇinī to Viśravas, 730; of Devavatī to Sukeśa, 733; fathers' concerns about daughters', 741, 746; of Kaikasī to Viśravas, 28; of Kaikasī, 741; of Kumbhakarṇa to Vajravālā, 746–47; of Kumbhīnasī to Madhu by abduction, 764–65; of Lakṣmaṇa to Ūrmilā, 123–25; maidens without, as a liability, 785; of Mandodarī to Rāvaṇa, 746; Narmadā (*gandharva* woman) gives daughters in, 734; of Pārvatī to Śiva, 88; of Pulastya with Tṛṇabindu's daughter, 730; of Rāma to Sītā, 11, 123–25;—recalled, 261; of Śatrughna to Śrutakīrti, 123–25; of Śiva to Umā, 88; of sons of Daśaratha to daughters and nieces of Janaka, 11; of Śūrpaṇakhā to Vidyujjihva, 746; Tṛṇabindu gives daughter to Pulastya in, 730; Vedavatī's hand sought in, 753; of Vibhīṣaṇa to Saramā, 747

Mārtāṇḍa. *See* Sūrya

Māruta (god of wind): etymology of name of, 99; infatuation of, with Añjanā, 426; son of Aditi, 785. *See also* Vāyu

Mārutas, 99

Maruts, 76, 79, 95, 101, 133, 158, 248, 199, 316, 385, 389, 403, 423, 455, 456, 481, 493, 506, 534, 699, 724, 768, 770, 771, 772, 842, 854; Diti gives birth to, 99; etymology of name of, 99

Marutta: *aśvamedha* performed by, 837; mocks Rāvaṇa, 754; sacrifices to Śiva (Maheśvara), 744; Saṃvarta restrains from fighting Rāvaṇa, 754; sets out to battle Rāvaṇa, 754; story of, 754–55

māṣas (class of ascetics), 302, 303

Mātali (charioteer of Indra), 173; ascends with chariot to the sky, 702; brings Rāma Indra's chariots, 689;—Indra's javelin, 691; drives chariot for Indra, 770–72; drives Rāma into battle, 694; Gomukha son of, 770; Indra dismisses, 772; Rāma pays homage to, 702; Rāvaṇa riddles with arrows, 690; reminds Rāma that he must use Brahmā's divine weapon, 698; unfazed by arrow wounds, 697

Matañga (sage): ashram of, 41, 363;—on Ṛśyamūka, 408;—blood drops fall on hermitage of, 363; curses Vālin, 363, 408; forest of, 348; Kabandha tells Rāma of, 347; Pampā as residence of students of, 347; pond of, 349

Matañgī: daughter of Krodhavaśā, mother of the elephants, 280

Mātariśvan. *See* Vāyu

Mathurā. *See* Madhurā

maxims. *See* proverbs

Māyā: immemorial consort of Rāma, 854

Maya (*asura* or *dānava*): architect of *dānavas*, 412; asceticism of, 746; boon to, from 412; Brahmā gives wealth of, to Hemā, 412; cave of, 418; creates forest and mansion of Hemā, 412; forges javelin of Rāvaṇa, 686; gives Mandodarī to Rāvaṇa in marriage, 545, 746; gives infallible javelin

to Rāvaṇa, 746; Hemā wife of, 746; Hemā's relationship with, 412; Indra kills, 412; javelin of, gained through austerities, 746;—strikes down Lakṣmaṇa, 746; lord of *daityas*, 746; Māyavin and Dundubhi sons of, 746; mountain stronghold of, 414; palace of, located on Maināka, 405; powers of illusion of, 327; unaware of Viśravas's curse, 746
Māyāvin (1): son of Maya, 746
Māyāvin (2): son of Dundubhi, 360; Vālin fights, kills, in cave, 360–61
mead, 451
meat: Bharadvāja provides to Bharata's army, 228–29; fit for sacrifice, 187, 812–13; Vasiṣṭha demands illusory, 812; in Rāvaṇa's drinking hall, 451; Kumbhakarṇa eats, 610–11; Niṣādas offer, to Bharata, 220; *rākṣasa* in the form of Vasiṣṭha demands, 812; *rākṣasa* women want to eat Sītā's organs, 472;—addicted to, 462; Rāma eats, 791;—and Lakṣmaṇa eat, 187;—gives up, 152, 489;—takes, 313;—tells Guha that he subsists on fruits and roots, 182; Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa eat, 187; Saṃpāti and his son seek, 372; vultures, seek, 420. *See also* cannibalism; flesh-eating
medicinal herbs. *See* healing herbs
Meghanāda (birth name of Indrajit), 747. *See also* Indrajit
Meghnad Badh Kavya, "The Killing of Meghanāda," 32
Menā (daughter of Meru): daughter of Meru, 87; mother of Ganges and Pārvatī, 87; wife of Himalaya, 87
Menakā (*apsaras*): infatuates Viśvāmitra, 115
mendicants. *See* ascetic(s)
Meru (mountain), 133, 147, 173, *passim*; ashram of Tṛṇabindu on slopes of, 729; deities resort to, 40; divine beings come to in evening, 403; Garuḍa heads toward, 644; Hanumān brags he can fly around one thousand times, 427; Hanumān swears by, 489; Menā daughter of, 87; monkeys are to search, 402; sons of Sukeśa perform austerities on, 733
Merusāvarṇi (sage): asceticism of, 403; Svayaṃprabhā daughter of, 412
metaphor, extended (*samastavasturūpaka*), 214, 288, 441, 601–2, 650, 683 776; of *aśokavana* as ravaged woman, 456–57; of battle as an ocean, 595; of battlefield as a river, 601–2, 771; of grief as an ocean, 214, 288; of Laṅkā as a woman, 437–38; of Narmadā as a woman, 776; of Rāvaṇa as a storm cloud, 448; Rāma, as refuge of the grief–stricken, 359
meter(s): *anuṣṭubh* type of, 8; of *Mahābhārata*, 8–9; of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 8–9; *śloka* type of, 8, 55
minister(s): of Arjuna Kārtavīrya, 775, 777–78; of Daśaratha, 60, 63, 64, 203–4, 724; Hanumān as, of Sugrīva, 27; of Rāma, 800, 820–21, 853;—consulted, 850–51; of Rāvaṇa 744, 749, 751, 752, 758, 761, 765, 769, 776, 778, 781–82;—bathe in Narmadā, 776;—eat ministers of Arjuna Kārtavīrya, 778;—Hanumān fights and kills sons of, 501–2; of Romapāda, 61–62; Tāra as, of Vālin, 731; of Vibhīṣaṇa, 573
Miśrakeśa (*gandharva* woman), 227
Mithi: etymology of, 805. *See also* Janaka
Mithilā (city): besieged by angry kings, 118; Janaka returns to, 125; kings assemble in, 118; lord of (*see* Janaka); Rāma accompanies Viśvāmitra to, 10–11, 100, 102; Sudhanvan lays siege to, 123; Yudhājit arrives in, 124
Mitra: curses Urvaśī to marry Purūravas, 804; story of Urvaśī and, and Varuṇa, 803–4; Vasiṣṭha enters semen of, and Varuṇa, 803
Mitrasaha Saudāsa (Kalmāṣapāda): boon of, 813; kills one of two *rākṣasas*, 812; sacrifice of, 812; Vālmīki tells story of, 812–13; Vasiṣṭha curses, to eat human flesh, 813;—*purohita* of, 812–13
Mlecchas: northern quarter is country of, 404: produced from wish-fulfilling cow, 107
monkey army: Akampana battles, 597; Aṅgada exhorts, 410, 423–24; Aṅgada exhorts, to fast to death, 414; assails Dadhimukha, 526–28; attacks Kumbhakarṇa, 623; attacks *rākṣasas* fleeing fire, 646; attempts to revive Rāma, 658; battles Akampana's forces, 601; battles *rākṣasas*' army, 580–

81, 582–83, 595, 597, 647, 651–52, 657, 662, 668, 675, 679–80; bites and claws Kumbhakarṇa, 623–24; burns Laṅkā, 645–46; cheers Hanumān's return with herbs, 645; crosses the ocean on bridge, 555; despair of, at prospect of crossing the ocean, 543; flees 656–57; flees at sight of Kumbhakarṇa, 613, 621–23; flees in dejection at apparent killing of Sītā, 556; flees in fear of Atikāya, 635–36;—of Makarākṣa, 652; —of Narāntaka, 632;—of Rāvaṇa, 683; —of Vibhīṣaṇa, 590–91; flees to Rāma for refuge from Kumbhakarṇa, 624, 626–27; flighty nature of, 450, 490, 515, 722; healed by herbs, 645; Jāmbavān rallies fleeing, 591; lays siege to Laṅkā, 577–79; leaders of, debate Vibhīṣaṇa's intentions, 549–51;—showered with gifts, 726; marches toward south, 540–42; mourns Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 585; Nala and, build bridge to Laṅkā, 15, 554–55; night battle between *rākṣasa* army and, 582–83; placement of, 573; plans to rescue Sītā, 525–26; protects Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 586–87; Rāma dispatches, to find Indrajit, 584;—meets with leaders of, on Mount Suvela, 574–76;—positions leaders of, to attack, 577–78; Rāvaṇa scorches, with Tāmasa weapon-spell, 683; rejoices at death of Indrajit, 671; rejoices at revival of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 593; reports on Sītā's condition, 531–32; routs remaining *rākṣasas*, 699; scales the walls of Laṅkā, 580; seeks refuge with Rāma, 605; sets fire to Laṅkā, 645–46; slain warriors of, restored to life, 713; Sugrīva assembles, 385; Sugrīva commander of, 398; surveys Laṅkā from Suvela, 575; unable to extract javelin from Lakṣmaṇa, 687; Vibhīṣaṇa ralllies, 586, 590; weapons of, 525

monkeys: announce arrival of Lakṣmaṇa, 388; arrive at Madhuvana, 526; assemble in Kiṣkindhā, 393, 397–98; behavior of, 450, 518; birth of, 70–71, 854; board the Puṣpaka flying palace, 715; bring water for consecration, 725; as comic figures, 24; Dadhimukha tries to restrain, 526; delighted at Hanumān's return, 518; devastate Madhuvana, 525–28; in dreams as inauspicious omens, 481, 483; drink honey-wine, 526–28; drunken behavior of, 526–27; eating of prohibited, 370; except Hanumān, accompany Rāma to heaven, 852–53; failure of search, for Sītā of, 408–409; fasting to death of, 416, 417, 418, 454; fear Rāma, 373; gods take birth as, 70–71; grief of, 379, 428, 454, 486, 789; Hanumān encourages, to drink honey-wine, 527; invade the Madhuvana with permission of Aṅgada and senior, 526; number of, 385, 393, 580; praise Hanumān, 518; return to divine source, 855; return to Prasravaṇa, 408; revile Dadhimukha, 526–27; search for Sītā, 408–23; seek protection of Vālиln, 377; of southern search party, 411; Sugrīva dispatches, to search for Sītā, 13, 402–7;—orders Nīla to muster, 13, 385; —orders Hanumān to summon, 394; —summons, to Kiṣkindhā, 394–95; summoned to *aśvamedha*, 838; Suṣeṇa as physician of, 27; Svayaṃprabhā questions, 412; take on forms at will, 373, 560, 788, 852, 853; Tārā as protector of, 375; translation of words for, 46; vedic gods incarnate as, 10; void honey wine as urine, 529–30; wish to attend Rāma's consecration, 715; with Sugrīva at Pampā and Ṛśyamūka, 345, 346, 347, 349; witness Sītā's abduction, 326–27

monkey women: grief of, 368, 454

morning rites, 284

mountain(s): Candra and Droṇa in the sea of milk, 592; fear Indra, 431; gods terrified of, 433; had wings in Kṛta Yuga, 433; Indra severed wings of, 433; lifting of, by Rāvaṇa, 30, 752; of healing herbs (*see* healing herbs: mountain of)

Mount Añjana. *See* Añjana

Mount Aruṇa. *See* Aruṇa

Mount Citrakūṭa. *See* Citrakūṭa

Mount Dardara. *See* Dardara

Mount Dhūmra. *See* Dhūmra

Mount Himalaya. *See* Himalayas

Mount Kailāsa. *See* Kailāsa

Mount Mahendra. *See* Mahendra

Mount Mālyavān (Prasravaṇa). *See* Mālyavān; Prasravaṇa

Mount Mandara. *See* Mandara
Mount Meru. *See* Meru
Mount Prasravana. *See* Mālyavān; Prasravaṇa
Mount Prasravaṇa. *See* Prasravaṇa
Mount Ṛṣyamūka. *See* Ṛṣyamūka
Mount Suvela. *See* Suvela
Mount Vindhyā. *See* Vindhyā
Mṛtyu (god of death), 246, 298, 318, *passim*; accompanies Yama in battle against Rāvaṇa, 759–60; asks to kill Rāvaṇa, 759; cannot be withstood, 338; destroys entire triple world. 759; noose of, 285, 290, 293, 297, 737; war hammer of, 759; Rāvaṇa fights, 759–60; vows to kill *asuras*, 759. *See also* Dharmarāja; Kāla; Kṛtānta; Vaivasvata; Yama

Nahuṣa, 200, 252; father of Yayāti, 122, 136, 805–86; Rāma equal to, 218; son of Ambarīṣa, 122, 252, 339
Naimiṣa forest, 838
Nala (architect of the monkeys), 15, 27, 390, 540, 560, 564, 576, 580, 587, 597, 614, 683, 787–88; Aṅgada exhorts to return to battle, 621; arrival of, in Kiṣkindhā, 365; arrows of Indrajit strike and fells, 642–43; charges Rāvaṇa, 605; equal in skill to his father, 554; fights Pratapana, 581; and monkeys build bridge, 15, 27, 53, 56, 554–55;—recalled, 716–17, 721; number of troops of, 397, 558–60; participates in Sugrīva's consecration, 380; Rāma has, build bridge, 53; son of Viśvakarman, 554; takes counsel with other monkeys, 573; Viśvakarman grants boon to, 554
Nalakūbara (son of Kubera): confirms Rambhā's story, 767; curses Rāvaṇa, 767–68
Nandana (divine weapon-spell) of the *vidyādharas*, 80
Nandana (minister of Daśaratha), 204
Nandana garden (Indra's garden), 228–29, 236, 299, 311, 347, 384, 458, 478, 498, 526, 575, 742–43, 747, 772, 790; Kubera revived in, 751; Rāvaṇa destroys, 748–49
Nandi(n). *See* Nandīśvara
Nandigrāma: Bharata lives in, 52, 54, 56, 257–58, 721, 809; Hanumān reaches, 718
Nandīśvara, 283: curses Rāvaṇa, 16, 24, 751–5; orders Puṣpaka turned back, 752
Nārada (divine seer): alerts Nṛga to danger facing him, 801; entertains Bharata, 228; goes to heaven with Vaivasvata, 760; Kausalyā invokes, 158; narrates history of Rāma to Vālmīki, 9–10, 18, 38–39, 51–55; praises Rāvaṇa's valor in battle, 756; returns to heaven with Viavasvata, 760; warns Rāvaṇa about following Yama's path, 756–57; warns Yama of Rāvaṇa's intentions, 757–58
Nārada (king of *gandharvas*), 228
Nārada (minister of Daśaratha): describes practices of social classes in *yugas*, 821–22; explains untimely death of child, 18, 821, reasons that a *śūdra* is practicing asceticism in Rāma's realm, 821–22
Naraka (*dānava*): lives in Prāgjyotiṣa, 403; son of Kālakā, 280; Viṣṇu kills, 629, 759, 768
Narāntaka (rākṣasa troop leader), 601, 604; Aṅgada fights and kills, 632–33; death of, recalled, 635, 668, 715; flesh marks path of, 632; knocks Aṅgada unconscious, 633; Kumbhakarṇa paternal uncle of, 628; leads *rākṣasas* into battle, 629–30, 632
Narasiṃhāvatāra (Man–lion), 30
Nārāyaṇa. *See* Viṣṇu
Narmadā (*gandharva* woman): gives daughters in marriage, 734
Narmadā (river), 400, 559, 778; Arjuna Kārtavīrya blocks flow of, 777;—sports in, 775; Rāvaṇa and ministers bathe in, 776
necklace. *See* gold necklace; pearl necklace(s)

nectar of immortality, 159, 233, 302, 346, 427, 592, 721; churned from ocean of milk, 98, 418, 761; Garuḍa seeks and steals, 303; gods and demons desire to obtain, 97; gods and *asuras* churn ocean for, 97–98, 418, 469, 620, 757, 781, 790; gods gain, 134, 339; Mainda and Dvivida drink, 525, 560; produced from sacrifice, 395; Rāvaṇa threatens to churn ocean for, 757; Sītā tells Rāvaṇa that he could not survive assaulting her even should he drink, 319. *See also* ocean: churning of
Nikumbha (*rākṣasa* warrior): Nīla fights and kills, 581–82
Nikumbha Kumbhakarṇi (son of Kumbhakarṇa), 647; Hanumān fights and kills, 651; minister of Rāvaṇa, 509, 546–47, 769
Nikumbhilā (goddess), 472; Indrajit performs sacrifices at shrine of, 641, 657, 660–62
Nīla (monkey troop leader), 365, 390, 397, *passim*; appointed as scout for army, 540; confronts Prahasta at eastern gate, 573; created by gods, 787; fights Atikāya, 637; fights Indrajit, 641; fights and kills Mahodara, 634; Indrajit strikes down, 643; Nikumbha, 581–82;—Prahasta, 602–3;—Prahasta, recalled, 721; general of Rāma's army, 502, 540–41, 564, 577, 614;—of one humdred thousand troop leaders, 557; guards eastern gate, 573; Kaikeyī embraces, 722; has army camp, 543; hurls mountaintop at Kumbhakarṇa, 623; kills Mahodara (2), 634; member of southern search party, 400; number of troops of, 397; one of "five tigers among monkeys," who rushes Kumbhakarṇa, 623; one of four monkeys who can leap to Laṅkā, 438; Pāvaki as patronymic of, 614; perches on Rāvaṇa's battle standard, 606–7; pulls out arrow in Vālin, 377; Rāma gives gifts to, 742; Rāma orders, to scout way for army, 540; Rāvaṇa attacks and fells, 606–7; son of Agni, 400, 603; scouts way for army, 541; Sugrīva orders, to assemble monkey army, 385; stationed at eastern gate, 573, 577, surrounded by one hundred million troops, 560, Triśiras immobilizes, 634
Nimi: birth of, 804; boon of, 805; brahmans churn body of, 805; curses Vasiṣṭha, 803; founder of Janaka's lineage,122; founds Vaijayanta, 802; Gautama performs sacrifice for, 802; son of Ikṣvāku, 802; son of, called Mithi, Janaka, and Vaideha, 805; story of, 802–5; Vasiṣṭha curses, to become disembodied, 803
Niṣāda (hunter), kills *sārasa* crane (*krauñca*), 9, 54–55; Vālmīki curses, 9, 54
Niṣāda(s) (forest tribe), Guha, king of, 56, 182, 186, 220–21, 223–24, 717; boat of, 795; ferry Bharata and his army across the Ganges, 224–25; Garuḍa lays waste to realm of, 303; offer hospitality and provisions to Bharata, 220; Rāma recalls help of, 795; Viśvāmitra curses Mahodaya to become, 111
Niśākara (ascetic), ashram of, 421; boon to from, 421; foretells abduction of Sītā by, 422; foretells new wings for Saṃpāti, 422; grants boon to Saṃpāti 421; Saṃpāti tells story of meeting with, 420–22
nītiśāstra (statecraft), discourse of Kumbhakarṇa on, to Rāvaṇa, 31;Rāma questions Bharata about his conduct of, 238–41; *Rāmāyaṇa* as, 5; text on kingship and governance, 5
Nivātakavacas (class of *daityas*), alliance of, with Rāvaṇa, 760–61; boon of, 760
noose(s) (*pāśa*[*s*]): of Brahmā, 108; of Dharma, 80; of Kāla, 73, 80, 108, 111, 285, 292, 298, 321, 323, 326, 512, 548, 574, 590, 664, 760, 846; of Mṛtyu, 285, 290, 293, 297, 737, 759; of Varuṇa, 80, 108, 403, 456, 786; of Yama, 295, 297, 307, 624, 637
northern quarter: description of, 404–6; dispatching of search party to, 407
northern search party: dispatching of, to northern quarter, 407; failure of, to find Sītā, 409; Śatabali as leader of, 404, 407
Nṛga: brahmans curse, to become a lizard, 801–2; burrows of, 801–2; consecrates Vasu, 801; gives cows to brahmans, 800; Nārada and Pārvata alert, to danger facing him, 801; *purohita* of, not named, 801; story of, and brahmans, 800–802; Vāsudeva liberates from curse, 801
number: of apes, 387, 393, 580; of langurs, 393; of monkeys, 385, 393, 580; of *rākṣasa* troops, 392, 513; of troops of monkeys, 397–98

oath: spoken word as, 387; swearing of, of Bharata, by Rāma's feet, 291;—of Bharata, by truth, 851; —of Daśaratha, 143, 248, 711;—of Daśaratha by acquired merit, 143;—of Daśaratha to exile Rāma, 142; —of Hanumān, 497;—Hanumān on mountains and fruits and roots, 489; —of Hanumān on truth, 534 ;—of Lakṣmaṇa, 156, 795;—of Lakṣmaṇa, on truth, 183; of—of Lakṣmaṇa on truth and bow, 153;—of Rāma, on arms and life, 794;—of Rāma, on truth, 358;—of Rāvaṇa, 572, 742;—of Sītā, on truth, 494;—of Sītā on virtue, 707 (*see also* Sītā: truth-act of);—of Sugrīva, 25, 387;—of Sugrīva, on truth, 359; of—of Sugrīva on Vālin's feet, 360;—of townspeople, on sons, 181. *See also* truth-act; vow
ocean: agitated by battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, 697; churning of, 97–98, 418, 469, 620, 757, 781, 790; (*see also* ocean of milk: churning of); description of, 543; difficulty in crossing, 537; digging of, 91–93, 96; god of (*see* Sāgara; Varuṇa); leaping of, by Hanumān, 14, 53, 56, 427–37, 516–18; leaping of, discussion of, 423–25; monkey army crosses, 555; monkey army reaches southern shore of, 542; Nala and monkeys build bridge across, 554–55; Rāma asks Vibhīṣaṇa how to cross 552–53;—proposes building bridge to cross, 538;—encamps on shore of, 543–44, 568;—and Sugrīva deliberate crossing, 542–43
ocean of milk: churning of, 97–98; healing herbs located near, 591; in eastern quarter, 398–99; locus of Candra and Droṇa, 592; monkeys live on shore of, 394; nectar of immortality churned from (*see* nectar of immortality); supreme seers drink foam of, 761
Odyssey, 3
offerings: to ancestors, 87, 105, 250, 251, 283, 349, 845; to guest. *See also* guest-offering(s)
old age: Yayāti exchanges, with son Pūru, 805–7
Old Avadhī, 43
Old Testament, 37
omen(s): Lakṣmaṇa observes, 576; presage Rāma's victory and Rāvaṇa's defeat, 695; *rākṣasas* observe, 498; Rāma observes, 330–33, 576, 695; Rāma skilled in reading, 291, 695; Tārā reads 376. *See also* auspicious omen(s); inauspicious omens
omniscient vision of *ṛṣi* (seer), 4, 39
oral composition, 7
ordeal by fire (*agniparīkṣā*): of Sītā, 15, 17, 708, 710–11;—*Uttarakāṇḍa* refers to, 793
ornament(s): 60, 69, 84, *passim*; of Agastya, accepts from Śveta;—gives to Rāma, 824; —made by Viśvakarman, 824;—Rāma accepts, 826; Anasūyā gives, to Sītā, 262; of Atikāya, 630;Daśaratha wants to give, to Sītā, 171; Garuḍa wears, 592; good conduct, of virtuous, 704; husband is a woman's finest, 461; of Kaikeyī, stripped off, 143; king of Kekeya gives to Bharata, 206; of Kumbhakarṇa, 620; of Mārīca, 313; of ministers of Rāvaṇa, 501; of monkeys, 724; of *rākṣasas*, 440–41; Rāma gives, to monkeys, 726;—orders Sītā tobe adorned with, 705;—orders Vibhīṣaṇa to give, to monkeys, 714; —rejects Vibhīṣaṇa's offer of, 713; of Rambhā, broken, 767; Rāvaṇa adorns sons with, before battle, 630; promises, to Sītā, 317, 471; Saṃpāti sees Sītā throwing, 418; Sītā emerges from fire adorned with, 710; of Sītā broken, 337;—described, 324–27;—dropped, 357;—dropped, Jaṭāyus sees, 418;—dropped monkeys find, 485;—enflame Rāma's grief, 485; —lacking of, 459, 462–64;—wears, 418, 460;—wishes to give, to sages' wives, 794–95; Sugrīva shows, to Rāma, 357; of Vāyu, 785; of women of Rāvaṇa's inner apartments, 442–44, 446–48, 464, 466, 521. *See also* hair ornament; gold necklace; jewel; jewelry; pearl necklace(s); signet ring
ospreys, 346, 386, 413, third path in sky, that of, 419; women shriek like, 700
Oṣṭhakarṇakas (name of a people), 399

Padmā (goddess), 853
Padma (guardian elephant [*diggaja*]), 776. *See also* Mahāpadma
Padma (presiding deity of Kubera's treasury), 750–51

padma (type of mansion), 440
padma(*ka*) (type of sandalwood), 390, 402, 418
padma(*ka*) (type of tree), 394, 404, 516
Pahlavas: destroy Viśvāmitra's army, 106; produced from wish-fulfilling cow, 106–107; Viśvāmitra's army destroys, 106
palace of Rāvaṇa: description of, 443–46; Puṣpaka (flying palace) as, 445–46. *See also* Puṣpa/Puṣpaka(vimāna)
Pampā (lake), 13, 53, 56, 72, 354–55, 717; description of, 346–47, 349–52; Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa arrive at, 351; as residence of Sugrīva and monkeys, 345–46, 347, 349, 350; Ṛśyamukha located east of, 347
Pampā (pond), 346, 716
Pampā (river), 269
Panasa (monkey troop leader), 525, 540–41, 574; advises Rāma about Vibhīṣaṇa, 573; Aṅgada exhorts to fight, 622; arrives in Kiṣkindhā, 397; cut through with a sword, 565; dwells on Mount Pāriyātra, 558; struck down in battle, 643; Suṣeṇa sends to ocean of milk for healing herbs, 592
panasa (tree or fruit), 227, 323, 276, 281, 346, 565
Pañcajana: Viṣṇu kills, on Mount Caravān, 403
Pāñcajanya (conch [*śaṅkha*] of Viṣṇu), 737
Pañcāpsaras (Pond of the Five Apsarases): etymology of name of, 247; story of, 274
Pañcavaṭī (forest), 12–13, 281; Agastya directs Rāma to, 279; description of, 281–82; Rāma dwells in, with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa in, 12, 281
Pāṇḍavas: devious behavior of, 38
Pāṇḍyas (region), 400–401
panegyrists (*bandins*), 35, 137, 146, 159, 201, 224, 395, 722
parasol. *See* umbrella
Paraśurāma. *See* Rāma Jāmadagnya
parāyaṇa (recitation). See *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*: recitation of
Pāriyātra (mountain), 403, 500, 558
Parjanya (god of rain), 295, 495, 559, 727, 845
Pārśvamauli, 750
Parvata (divine seer): alerts Nṛga to danger facing him, 801
Pārvata (king of *gandharvas*), 228
Pārvatī (Umā). 95; austerities of, 87–88; curses gods and the Earth 88–89; daughter of Himalaya, 87–88; grants boons to Sukeśa, 732–33; helps Śiva retain semen, 88; left eye of Kubera burned by gazing at, 748; offers Ila half a boon, 834; Śiva and, grant Sukeśa boons, 732–33; Śiva as lord of, 736; Śiva marries, 88; Śiva turns himself into a woman to delight, 833; story of Śiva and, and Ila/Ilā, 833–34
Passion Play, 6
past lives. *See* birth(s): reaping consequences of previous
Paśupati. *See* Śiva
Pātāla (underworld), 346, 370, 407–8, 436, 543, 610–11, 843; *asuras* inhabit, 432; *dānavas* inhabit, 423, 554, 577, 697, 843; Kauśikī rescued from, 494; *rākṣasas* enter, 740; Rāma demands Sītā be brought back from, 843. *See also* Rasātala
path(s): of ancestors, 131, 246; of crows as second in sky, 419; of falcons as fourth in sky, 419; Ganges goes by three, 76, 87–88, 96–97, 182, 186, 716; of kites as third in sky, 419; of *krauñcas* as third in sky, 419; of *kuliṅgas* as first in sky, 419; of sons of Vinatā as highest in sky, of *haṃsas* as sixth in sky, 419; of ospreys as third in sky, 419; of vultures as fifth in sky, 419
pativratā (ideal wife), 5, 22, 24. *See also* ideal wife

Paulastya(s), lineage of, 74; House of, 299; patronymic of Indrajit, 655, 664;—of Rāvaṇa (Daśagrīva), 321, 463, 470, 612, 614, 672, 746, 752–53;—of Triśīras/Trimūrdhan, 633;—of Vibhīṣana, 743; —of Viśravas, 730, 741, 746; Rāma kills, 740
Paulastyavadha (Slaying of Paulastya): alternative name of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3, 57
Paulomī. *See* Śacī
pauṇḍarīka (sacrifice): of Rāṃa, 726
Pauravas (region): searched by northern search party, 404
Pauravas (vedic clan); associated with the *Mahābhārata*, 35
Pavana. *See* Vāyu
peacock: Indra grants boon to, 754–55
pearl necklace(s): Indra has Vāyu give Rāma, 725; of Kaikeyī, 142; of Sītā, 325; Rāma gives Hanumān, 789; Rāma gives Sītā, 726; of Rāvaṇa's women, 447, 451; of Sītā falls during abduction, 325; Sītā gives Hanumān, 726; Vidyādhara women wear, 430
performance, of *Rāmāyaṇa*. See *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*: recitation of
phalaśruti (fruitful hearing): benefit of hearing Rāmāyaṃa, 9
Plakṣa (monkey): announces Lakṣmaṇa's arrival, 389
plakṣa (tree), 67, 346
poem (*kāvya*): *Rāmāyaṇa* as first (*ādikāvya*), 4; uniqueness of *Rāmāyaṇa* as, 3–4; *Uttarakāṇḍa* identified as, 844; *Vālmīkirāmāyaṇa* self identifies as, 55–57, 818, 839–40, 844. *See also* poetry; *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*
poet(s) (*kavis*): Vālmīki as first (*ādikavi*), 4; Vālmīki and Vyāsa as historian-, 39–40
poetry (*kāvya* or *śloka*): *Rāmāyaṇa* as, 3, 4; Vālmīki creates, 9, 54–55;—renders *Rāmāyaṇa* story into, 57. *See also* poem; *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*
poison, 197, 283, 301, *passim*; Devayānī threatens suicide by, 806; drinking *kālakūṭa* as a means of suicide, 318; drinking of, 323, 326, 473, 750;—as a means of feticide, 252;—as a means of suicide, 150, 454; food consisting of, 511; herbs counteract, 430; in food, 224, 286; monkeys threaten suicide by, 454;—warned about fruit and water mixed with, 540; murder by, 474; Sagara (*sa-gara*) born with, 122, 252; Sītā threatens suicide by, 163–64, 314, 477–78; women of Ayodhyā, threaten suicide by, 181
politics: gendering of, in *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, 12
popular saying. *See* proverbs: "no such thing as untimely death," 477
porcupine: eating of, by brahmans and kshatriyas, 370
porridge, 212, 229; Daśaratha apportions, to wives, 69–70; emerges from sacrificial fire, 69
portents. *See* auspicious omen(s); inauspicious omens; omen(s)
power(s) of illusion (*māyā*): of ascetics (*see* ascetic power); Kāla created by, 849; of Indrajit, 588–89, 592, 641, 655–56, 661–62, 673, 729, 772; of Indrajit called *tāmasī*, 764; of Mārīca, 325–26; of Mārīca and Subāhu, 83–84; of Maya, 327; of *rākṣasas*, 630, 751; of Rāma, 700; of Rāvaṇa, 341, 545–46, 685, 693, 696, 751, 76; Rāvaṇa's chariot fashioned through, 320; Rāvaṇa's weapons infused with, 696; Śiva (Paśupati) gives to Indrajit, 764; of Tāṭakā, 79; of Vidyujjihva, 564; of Viṣṇu as yogic, 82
Prabhāva (monkey): announces arrival of Lakṣmaṇa, 389, 577
Prācetasa: Vālmīki as, 840
Praghasa (field marshal of Rāvaṇa): Hanumān fights and kills, 502–3; son of Sumālin, 734
Praghasa (minister of Vibhīṣaṇa), 573
Praghasa (monkey hero), 577
Praghasa (*rākṣasa*): Sugrīva fights and kills, 581
Praghasā (*rākṣasa* woman), 472
Prāgjyotiṣa (city): *dānava* Naraka lives on, 403; located on Varāha mountain, 403

Prahasta (minister of Rāvaṇa), 729, 732, 744, 745, 749–50, 769, 776–78; Arjuna Kārtavīrya fells in battle, 778; encourages Rāvaṇa to fight Kubera, 744; Rāvaṇa sends as messenger to Kubera, 744–46; son of Sumālin, 734
Prahasta (*rākṣasa* general), 509–10, 567, 603, 610, 629, 668, 678, 715, 728, 729, 732; battles monkey army, 601–2; believes returning Sītā, is only way to avoid war, 599; inauspicious omens presage defeat of, 600; interrogates Hanumān, 509–10; Nīla fights and kills, 602, 721; Rāvaṇa claims, killed Rāma, 565–66;—dispatches to battle, 599–600;—stations at eastern gate, 572–73; son of Jambumālin, 500; vows to fight for Rāvaṇa, 546
Praheti (*rākṣasa*, brother of Heti), 732
Prahlāda/Prahrāda (*asura* devotee of Viṣṇu), 30, 649
Prajañgha (*rākṣasa*): fights Saṃpāti (monkey), 581
Prajāpati. *See* Brahmā
Prajāpatis (lords of creatures): Brahmā fourth of six, 470; Jaṭāyus names, 280; Vivasvant first among, 251
Pramāthin (monkey troop leader), 559, 577
Pramāthin (*rākṣasa* warrior): Rāma fights and kills, 291, 293
Prasravaṇa (mountain), 298, 336; monkeys return to, without Sītā, 408–9; Rāma lives on, 381; Sītā implores, for aid, 320; Sugrīva and Rāma meet on, 395–96. *See also* Mālyavān (mountain)
Prasthalas: northern quarter location of country of, 404
Pratapana (*rākṣasa*): battles Nala, 581
Pratardana (ally of Rāma): Rāma embraces and dismisses, 787
Pratiṣṭhāna (city): founded by Ila, 837; inherited by Purūravas, 837
Prativāsudeva, 36
Prauṣṭhapada (month), 383
Prayāga (confluence), 225, 228; Rāma's visit to, 188–90
preceptor: of the Taittirīyas, 166; Śukra, of demons, 415, 715. See also *purohita*(s)
pregnancy: gaze of Pulastya causes, 729; of Sālakaṭañkaṭā, 732; Sītā, 17, 796; of Tṛṇabindu's daughter, 729; of wives of Asita, 252; Rāma observes signs of, in Sītā, 791
prenuptial promise: Daśaratha breaks, 23
preservation: of bodies of Nimi, 804;—in vat of oil, 202, 822. *See also* corpse(s): preservation of, of Nimi
previous lives. *See* birth(s): reaping consequences of previous; reincarnation
proclaim: name when entering battle, 326, 500, 579, 635, 760, 762
prologue (*upodghāta*) of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 4, 6, 9–10, 39, 51–58
protection of ascetics. *See* ascetic(s): protection of, as duty of kings
proverbs, 197, 241, 246–47, 415, 499, 800; "cheerfulness, perseverance, and mental fortitude produce success in an undertaking," 410; "It is impossible for a man or a woman to die before the appointed time," 473; "giving away of something that has been given brings great benefits," 824; "grief diminishes with the passage of time," 543; "Joy will eventually come to a person who lives, even if it takes a hundred years," 482, 719; "kshatriya has no real power," 106; "living in forest is nectar of immortality," 233; "men take after their mothers not their fathers," 283; "no such thing as untimely death," 477; "in this world a man's destiny inevitably follows him," 416; "When a husband dies first, they say it is because of the wife's lack of virtue," 566
Pṛthivī (goddess of earth), 177. *See also* Dharaṇī; Mādhavī; Vasudā
Pulastya (brahman-seer), 837; ashram of, 729–30; curse of, on girls, 729; descendants of, 289–90; distracted by young girls, 729; gaze of causes pregnancy, 729; marries Tṛṇabindu's daughter, 730; one of the mind-born sons of Brahmā, 470; one of the Prajāpatis, 280, 470; *rākṣasas* spring from

lineage of, 732; requests Arjuna Kārtavīrya to release Rāvaṇa, 779–80; son of Brahmā, 729, 780; Tṛṇabindu recognizes curse of, 730; Viśravas son of, 28, 730, 741
Pulindas: northern quarter location of country of, 404
Puloman: Anulāda seizes daughter of (Śacī) (comparison), 396; carries Jayanta from battlefield, 770; father of Śacī, 396–97, 490; grandfather of Jayanta, 770; Indra kills, 397
punishment, 18, 360, 415, 421, 483, *passim*; for committing sin, 371, 372; *daṇḍa* as word for, 827; death as, 371, 385, 414, 513, 528, 562, 850; death as, for illicit sexual relations, 371; death not, for emissaries, 512;—of Vālin as, 371–72; deformity as, 421; execution as harshest, 247; Hanumān encourages Rāma to inflict, on *rākṣasas*, 608;—seeks, against *rākṣasa* wardresses, 34, 704; imprisonment as, 416; Kaikeyī as deserving, 247; kings mete out, 203, 338, 369, 370–71; kings wield rod of, 264; kshatriyas mete out, 60; Māndhātṛ inflicts, 371; of ministers, 562; *rākṣasa* women seek, for Hanumān, 499;—should not be subject to, 34 704; Rāma metes out, 18, 338, 371, 578; Rāma's judgement in determining, 372; relative nature of, 80; rod (*daṇḍa*) of, 264, 452, 512, 578, 826; Sītā threatens Rāvaṇa with, from Rāma, 320; of sons, 60; Sugrīva as wielder of, 410, 414, 416, 425, 452, 528; tail of Hanumān set on fire as, 27, 513; by Vālin, 360–61; on Vālin by Rāma, 371–72; Vālin freed from sin of, 372. *See also* Daṇḍa (son of Ikṣvāku)
Puñjikasthalā (*apsaras*), 425. *See also* Añjanā
purohita(s) (household priest[s]): Agni as, of gods, 89; Bṛhaspati as, of gods, 339;—of Indra, 723; function of, defined, 35; as members of royal court, 35; Kāñcana as, of Śatrughna, 852; of Arjuna Kārtavīrya not named, 780; of Bharata not named, 718; of Daśaratha not named, 120, 146, 213–14, 219; of Nṛga not named, 801; of Rāma not named, 800; of Romapāda not named, 61–62; of Śatrughna not named, 818; of Viśvāmitra not named, 105; Śatānanda as, of Janaka, 102–3, 120–21; Uśanas Kāvya as, of *asuras*, 599;—of Daṇḍa, 827;—of *rākṣasas*, 599; Vāmadeva as, of Rāma, 60, 133, 820; Vasiṣṭha as, of Bharata, 203–6, 209, 212–14, 218–19, 225–26, 231, 235–36, 239, 243–44, 228, 238, 244, 248, 251, 253, 255, 257, 725;—of Daśaratha, 52, 60, 62–66, 68, 71–73, 75, 120–26, 133, 136–37, 339, 798–99;—of Ikṣvāku, 804; —of Mitrasaha, 812–13;—of Rāma, 723–25, 810–11, 820–21, 837, 841, 850–51, 853;—of Triśaṅku, 109–10, 541
Pūru: birth of, 805; rules in Pratiṣṭhāna, 807; son of Śarmiṣṭhā, 805; son of Yayāti, 805–7; Yayāti consecrates, 807; Yayāti exchanges old age with, 805–7
Purūravas: birth of, 836; inherits Pratiṣṭhāna, 837; king of Kāśi, 804; name of a king, 755; son of Ilā and Budha, 836; Urvaśī and, 319
Pūṣan (name of a god or one of the Ādityas), 158
Puṣkara (forest and lake), 113–15, 800; Viśvāmitra performs austerities at, 114
Puṣkara (son of Bharata): established as king in Puṣkarāvatī, 846–47
Puṣkara (unidentified figure): fights Rāvaṇa, 761; goes forth with Go, 761
Puṣkarāvatī: Bharata founds, 846–47
Puṣpa/Puṣpaka(vimāna), 18, 31, 121, *passim*; as abode of divinity, 758; attends Rāma, 822; Brahmā gives, to Kubera, 731; brought to a halt in the sky, 751; comes to and serves Rāma, 789–90; departs for the abode of Kubera, 723; description of, 445–46, 714; does not carry a widow, 589; flies wherever one desires, 318, 714, 751; Hanumān searches, 445–46, 451; Kubera owns, 299, 318, 329, 731; Kumbhakarṇa sees Rāvaṇa in, 615; Nandīśvara orders, turned back, 752; Rāma dismisses, 790;—reaches Kiṣkindhā in, 721; —returns to Nandigrāma in, 15, 53–54, 56, 714–16, 721–22;—searches for Śambūka in, 18, 822–23;—visits Agastya's ashram in, 823–24, 829; Rāvaṇa conquers realms from, 756–81;—falls from, 476;—offers Sītā to use, 329;—roams earth in, 754; —seated in, 615;—sees Kubera in, 742; —steals, from Kubera, 299, 329, 699, 713, 751; Sītā observes battlefield from, 587–89; Sugrīva and his army board, 715; Sumālin sees Kubera in, 740; Trijaṭā forces Sītā into, 587;—turns around, 589; Vibhīṣaṇa lends, to Rāma, 31, 56, 713–14; Viśvakarman creates, for Brahmā, 446; yoked to *haṃsas*, 825

Puṣya (chariot), 160
Puṣya (constellation, asterism), 132, 134–35, 138, 140, 146, 159, 282, 721
Put (a hell), 249

queens of Ayodhyā. *See* Kaikeyī; Kausalyā; Sumitrā
Qur'an, 3

rabbit: eating of by brahmans and kshatriyas, 370
Rāghava. *See* Lakṣmaṇa; Rāma
Raghu (son of Kakutstha), 36, 122, 252
Rāhu (demon of the eclipse), 125, 295, 305, *passim*; desires to devour the sun god Sūrya, 784; Hanumān mauls, 784–85; in story of Hanumān's birth, 784–85; son of Siṃhikā, 784
raining blood: as inauspicious omen, 29, 571, 576, 594, 679, 695, 737, 741
rainy season: description of, 382–83;—of end of, by Rāma, 386; inflames lust, 197, 382; living outdoors during, a type of austerity, 115; seduction of Ṛśyaśṛṅga will bring, 61–63; Sugrīva does not notice end of, 387
rājadharma (royal duty), 17, 20; in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, 16
Rājādhirāja (king of kings): as title, 35
Rājagṛha (city), 12, 140, 719; Bharata and Śatrughna depart from, 206; Bharata and Śatrughna live with grandfather in, 203–4; messengers of Vasiṣṭha arrive at, 205; Vasiṣṭha sends messengers to, 204
rājasūya (sacrifice), 35; Bharata advises Rāma not to perform, 830; Lakṣmaṇa recommends, 830; of Daśaratha, 238, 356; as destructive, 830; of Indrajit, 764; purifies one of all sins, 830; Rāma wishes to perform, 829–30
rākṣasa army: battles gods, 769–73; —Hanumān, 598–99, 663;—monkey army, 580–83, 595, 597, 647, 651–52, 657, 662, 668, 675, 679–80;—Viṣṇu, 737–40;—*yakṣas*, 749–51; believes Rāma slain by Indrajit, 586; of fourteen thousand, Dūṣaṇa rallies, 293;—Khara dispatches and leads, 289;—Rāma battles and destroys, 52, 293–94;—Rāma destroys, recalled, 300, 301, 327, 677; Garuḍa drives back, 736; monkey army destroys, of Rāvaṇa, 15; number of troops in, 539, 676; Rāma destroys, of Rāvaṇa, 15, 676; troop leaders of, Rāvaṇa sends forth, 502–503, 594—Rāvaṇa stations, to guard city, 572–73
rākṣasa brahmans. *See* brahman *rākṣasas*
rākṣasas, 27–28, 32, *passim*; abandon Laṅkā in fear of Viṣṇu, 731, 740, 744; as eaters of human flesh, 28, 83, 87, 273, 276, 288, 327, 332, 334, 346, 587, 603, 612, 732, 780; attempt to awaken Kumbhakarṇa, 610–11; beat and drag Hanumān, 508; Brahmā creates, 732; brahmans among, recite vedic *mantras*, 463; bring offerings to Rāma, 703; changing of form at will by (*see* shape-shifting: of *rākṣasas*); chiefs of, boast of killing Rāma single-handedly, 546; code of conduct of, 465; consecrate Rāvaṇa as lord of, 745–46; culture of, stands in opposition to that of Aryan, 28; description of, 440–42; each returns to own divine source, 855; engage in religious observances, 440, 443; etymology of word, 732; exotic food of, 451; flee to 731, 740, 744, 817; flesh-eating (*see* flesh-eating: by *rākṣasas*); funeral practices of (*see* Kabandha; Rāvaṇa: funerary rites of; Virādha: burial of); genealogy of, 16, 732–35; grief of mothers of slain, 501; Hanumān battles, 499–506, 513–14; —recalled, 782–83; in guise of cook offers Vasiṣṭha human flesh, 813; in guise of Vasiṣṭha, asks Mitrasaha for meat, 812; inauspicious omens presage destruction of (*see* inauspicious omens); intoxication of, 441; Khara dispatches fourteen, to attack Rāma, 286–87; —dispatches fourteen thousand, 289; kill ascetics, 269; live in Pātāla, 740 (*see also* Pātāla); live in 731, 744 (*see also* Rasātala); Mārīca foretells destruction of, 306, 309; night battle between monkeys and, 582–83; number of, in Lāṅkā, 392, 539; parodies of *āryan* civilization, 27–28;

perform sacrifices, 440, 443; power of illusion of, 83, 630, 751; Rāma battles and kills fourteen, 12, 287;—battles and kills fourteen thousand, 52, 291–94;—battles and kills fourteen thousand recalled, 300–301, 303, 326, 460, 474, 490, 652, 677, 720;—six, 583; Rāvaṇa dispatches eight, to Janasthāna, 327–28;—dispatches fourteen thousand, to Janasthāna, 763–64; Rāvaṇa stations, to defend Lañkā, 572; re-occupy Lañkā, 745–46; revival of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa dismays, 593–94; secret police of, 440; set fire to Hanumān's tail, 513; sound of monkey army demoralizes, 570; take on form at will, 392, 812; two lineages of, 740; Uśanas Kāvya as *purohita* of, 599; Viṣṇu takes birth to slaughter, 740;—vows to kill, 736; weapons of, 440–41, 443, 500; worship Viṣṇu, 854; *yakṣas* and, Brahmā, creates, 732

rākṣasa wardresses: description of, 462, 469; eaters of humans, 330, 462, 472, 475, 521; Hanumān asks Sītā for permission to kill, 704;—terrorizes, 498–99; intoxication of, 462, 472; menace Sītā, 330, 471–72, 477; Rāvaṇa orders, to guard Sītā, 330, 327; report Hanumān to Rāvaṇa, 499; show Sītā battlefield in Puṣpaka, 587; Sītā defies, 471, 473–74;—tells Saramā that, menace her, 569;—tells Hanumān not to punish, 704; tell Sītā of Hanumān's punishment, 513; terrorize Sītā in *aśoka* grove, 14, 33, 330, 470–72, 477;—recounted, 521; Trijaṭā rails at, for terrorizing Sītā, 476; worship Nikumbhilā, 472

rākṣasa women: blame Śūrpaṇakhā, 676–77; characterization of, 32–34; foretell Rāvaṇa's downfall, 678; grief of, 297, 676–78, 699–700; intoxication of, 442, 447–48. 463; lament of, for Rāvaṇa, 699–700;—their slain kinsmen, 676–78; not monolithically evil, 28; Surasā takes form of, 434. *See also* Dhānyamālinī; Mandodarī; Rāvaṇa: wives and courtesans of, described

ram. *See* Vātāpi, as demon ram

Rāma (Aikṣvāka, Dāśarathi, Kākutstha, Rāghava): abandons Sītā, 6, 17, 18, 19, 794–98; accompanies Viśvāmitra to Mithilā, 10–11, 83; addresses people of Ayodhyā, 177–78; adherence to righteousness (*dharma*) by, 11; admonishes Khara, 296; Agastya and (*see* Agastya); Agni instructs, to take Sītā back, 710; agrees to take Lakṣmaṇa to forest, 165;—Sītā to forest, 164; as Aiṣvāka, 77, 182, 184;—Lakṣmaṇa, and as, 342; alliance of, with Sugrīva, 13, 25, 30, 53, 56, 356–58, 364, 486, 716;—sanctified by fire, 356, 358; ancestors gratified by, 845; Añgada as messenger of, 578–79;—tells story of, to Saṃpāti, 417–18; argues against his own consecration, 245, 246–47, 250–51; army of, encamps near Mount Suvela, 563–64; arrives at Lake Pampā, 351; arrow(s) of;—Agastya gives, 278; —described, 266, 278, 287, 293–94, 363–64, 368, 697, 698, 810;—fletched with Garuḍa's feathers, 698;—invested with Brahmā's weapon-spell, 278, 698; —take any form at will, 690; ascends to heaven, 853–55; as an ascetic, 144, 152, 175, 209, 237, 258, 283, 306, 466, 566; ascetics host, for ten years, 274;—seek protection of, 12, 258, 264–65, 269, 273, 808;—show hospitality to, 264–65; ashram of, 52, 189–190, 230, 236, 242–43, 281, 284, 287, 279, 304, 309–10, 323–24, 720; asks Jaṭāyus to protect Sītā, 312; —javelin to spare Lakṣmaṇa, 686; —Lakṣmaṇa to protect Sītā, 312; *aśoka* grove of, 725, 790–91; assents to his own exile, 150; audience of, with Bharadvāja, 56, 188–90, 716–17; banishes Lakṣmaṇa, 19, 850–51; battles and kills fourteen *rākṣasas*, 12, 287;—fourteen thousand *rākṣasas*, 12, 291–94;—fourteen thousand recalled, 300–301, 303, 326, 460, 474, 490, 652, 677, 720;—six *rākṣasas*, 583; Bhadra tells, rumors about Sītā, 791–92; Bharadvāja directs, to Citrakūṭa, 189–90; Bharata and (*see* Bharata); birth of, 10, 71; —through own intention, 849; bleeding of, 565, 584, 589, 591, 655, 692; boons to, Bharadvāja grants, 717;—gods grant, 53, 721, 823;—Indra grants, 712–13, 722; born in House of lkṣvāku, 51, 329, 356; bow of, 585, 604–605, 626, 675–76, 683, 687, 689; Brahmā and (*see* Brahmā); brahman blames, for death of child, 18, 820; brahmans of Ayodhyā address, 178–79; breaks Śiva's bow, 11, 13, 119; —Virādha's right arm, 266; brothers of, as "life breaths outside body of," 793;—bound by oath to Rāma, 794; as Cakravartin (Universal Emperor), 35; calms Lakṣmaṇa, 235–36, 387–88; character synopsis of, 20–21; chariot battle of, with Rāvaṇa, 689–93, 695–98; closeness of Lakṣmaṇa and, 493–94; compared to Viṣṇu, 51, 609 (*see also* Rāma: as Supreme Being, Lord, Soul, or Spirit *this entry*);

compassion of, 34, 131, 149, 167, 181, 186, 195–96, 258, 260, 337, 369, 392, 460, 474, 478, 493, 513–14, 534, 593;—for crow, 493; complaint of seers to, about *rākṣasas*, 258–59; confides in Lakṣmaṇa, 187–88; confrontation of, with Rāma Jāmadagnya, 11, 56, 126–28; consecrates Añgada and Candraketu, 847; —Lava and Kuśa, 851–52; consecration of, 16, 725–26;—Ayodhyā readied for, 136–38;—ends some versions of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 19;—interrupted, 56, 150;—priests prepare for, 146–47; consoles Kausalyā, 157–58;—Vālin, 372; conversation with Niṣāda chief (Guha), 56, 183–84; cremates Jaṭāyus, 342; crosses bridge to Lañkā with army, 555;—Ganges (Mandākinī), 56, 186–87; cuts off Kabandha's right arm, 343; Daśaratha as foil for, 12, 23; —exiles Rāma, 11, 149–51;—spirit of, instructs, 711–12; death of *rākṣasa*s in Janasthāna by, recalled, 564, 700–701; —of *rākṣasas* in Lañkā by, recalled, 728; —of Virādha by, recalled, 564, 677, 697, 716, 719; deeds of, praised sages, 728–29; —recalled, 717; defends Viśvāmitra's sacrifice, 10, 82–83; deliberates crossing the ocean, 542–43; describes end of rainy season, 386;—hardships of the forest to Sītā, 161–62;—Pañcavaṭī, 281; description of, 51–52, 72, 130–31, 300–301, 354, 355, *passim*; description of body of, 133, 484–85; designated as prince regent, 11, 131–35; destroys *rākṣasa* army of Rāvaṇa, 15, 676; determined to kill Rāvaṇa himself, 574; devoted to the welfare of all, 103, 132, 189, 193, 219, 304, 306, 317, 321, 337, 338, 369, 412, 556, 676, 712, 850; directs Lakṣmaṇa to find Sugrīva, 350; discourses of, on fate, 378;—on righteousness and statecraft, 154, 238–41, 272–73; 370–72, *passim*; dismisses allies, 17, 787–89;—Guha, 186;—Puṣpaka, 790, 829; —Rāvaṇa from battle, 15, 30, 609;—Sumantra, 184–86; dispatches monkey army to find Indrajit, 584; Durvāsas foretells future of, to Daśaratha, 799;—visits, 849–50; dwells with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa in Pañcavaṭī, 12, 281–84; eats meat, 187, 791 (*see also* hunting: of Rāma); encamps on banks of Ganges, 182–84;—on Mount Suvela with chief monkeys, 574–76;—on northern shore with army, 543–44; encounter of, with Kabandha, 32, 53, 56, 343–47; —with Kabandha recalled, 460, 564, 627, 677, 697, 716, 717, 720;—with Samudra, 553–54 (*see also* Sāgara);—with Virādha, 12, 32, 52, 265–67;—with Virādha, recalled, 460, 474, 564, 627, 677, 697, 716, 719; enters blazing power of Viṣṇu at Sarayū, 854;—Daṇḍaka forest, 12, 52, 56, 264; establishes ashram on Citrakūṭa, 190–91; exhorts Sugrīva to search for Sītā, 358; exile of, to Daṇḍaka forest, 56, 144, 150, 152, 168–69;—recalled, 208–9, 245, 434, 510, 519–20; fasting of, 223, 251, 306; fears criticism of people, 17, 793; fights and kills Agniketu, Raśmiketu, Suptaghna, and Yajñakopa, 581;—Dūṣaṇa, 32, 52, 293;—Dūṣaṇa recalled, 52, 293; Rāma fights and kills recalled, 300–301, 303, 327, 461, 480, 564, 585, 652, 677, 697, 715;—Khara, 52, 56, 295–98; —Khara recalled, 300–301, 303, 307, 314, 321–23, 327, 329, 460–61, 480, 547, 564–65, 585, 627, 677, 692, 697, 700,716 ;—Kumbhakarṇa, 626–28; —Mahākapāla, Sthūlākṣa, and Pramāthin, 291–93; Makarākṣa, 652–53;—Triśiras, 32, 52, 56, 294–95; fights Indrajit, 584–85, 642, 654–55;—Ravaṇa, 608–9, 683–85, 687, 689–98;—and kills Rāvaṇa in final battle, 695–98; filial devotion of, 11; final audience of, with Daśaratha, 167–72; followers of, assume celestial forms, 854–55; founds Añgadīyā for Añgada, 847;—Candrakāntā for Candraketu, 847;—Kuśavatī for Kuśa, 852;—Śrāvatī for Lava, 852; frees Ahalyā from curse, 101–2;—Kabandha from curse, 344–45; —Virādha from curse, 266–67; friendship of, with Sugrīva, 354, 356, 358, 364, 371, 549–50, 590, 725; Garuḍa heals wounds of, and Lakṣmaṇa, 592; genealogy of, 121–122, 251–52; gives armlets to Añgada, 726;—arrow of Viṣṇu to Śatrughna, 810 —away wealth, 11, 165–66;—donations to ascetics, 845;—gifts to brahmans, 726; —gifts to Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa, 788; —Sītā pearl necklace, 726; gods remind, of true identity, 708–710, 844; grief of, 19, 172, 241–242, 266;—at seeing Lakṣmaṇa pierced by javelin, 686;—for Jaṭāyus, 342; —over abandonment of Sītā, 794, 799–800;—over banishment of Lakṣmaṇa, 850, 851;—over death of brahman boy, 820–21;—over false report of Sītā's death, 658, 661;—over separation from Sītā, 334–336, 339, 349, 351–52, 355, 357–58, 381, 385–87, 393, 485–86, 488–89, 530, 537–38, 543–44;—over Sītā's return to her mother, 843–44; Hanumān and (*see* Hanumān); has golden image of Sītā fashioned, 18, 838; has Lakṣmaṇa consecrate Vibhīṣaṇa,

15, 31, 53, 552, 702–3; history of, 355, 356, 413;—Lavaṇa heard by, 808–809; identification of, with Viṣṇu, 128, 571, 677, 709–10, 740, 844, 848–49, 854; Ikṣvāku as ancestor of, 36; impervious to weapons of Indrajit, 642; inaugurates Rāmarājya, 5–6, 16; as *avatāra* (incarnation) of Viṣṇu, 4, 5n, 9, 11, 20, 35, 40, 844; Indra foretells great feat of, 267–68;—has Vāyu give golden necklace and lotuses to, 725;—sends weapons, chariot, and Mātali to, 689; Indrajit binds, and Lakṣmaṇa with serpent weapons, 24, 32, 584–85;—reports death of, and Lakṣmaṇa, 586; informs brothers of the people's allegations, 793;—Kausalyā of his exile, 152;—Sītā of his exile, 159–60; inner apartments of, 147, 311, 791, 853; instructs monkeys not to take human form in battle, 574; as instrument of Rāvaṇa's destruction, 524; Jābāli urges, to accept kingship, 249–50; Jaṭāyus reassures, 341; —tells, about Sītā's abduction, 340–41; journey of, with Viśvāmitra, 10–11, 75–102; justifies killing Vālin, 370–72; Kabandha directs to, Pampā, 346–47;—urges alliance between Sugrīva and, 345–46, 347; Kaikeyī informs, of impending exile, 150; Kausalyā and co-wives meet with, on Mount Citrakūṭa, 243–44;—blesses, 158–59; Khara and, mock each other, 297–98; kicks Dundubhi's skeleton, 53, 363; killing of Vālin by, as unjust, 370; kills Mārīca, 13, 312–13;—Rāvaṇa, 15, 698;—kills Śambūka by beheading, 18–20, 41, 822–23;—Subāhu, 10, 83; —Tāṭakā, 10, 79;—Vālin by ambush, 13, 14, 25, 26, 368;—Virādha, 266–67; Kumbhakarṇa decimates monkey army, 5, 31, 624; Lakṣmaṇa and, (*see* Lakṣmaṇa); Lakṣmaṇa as emotional foil for, 11, 22; —as second life breath of, 22, 72, 561; —builds hut for, 191, 282;—calms, 338–40;—consoles, 335, 381, 386, 658–60, 800; describes winter to, 282–83;—guards door for, 848;—urges, to proceed with the consecration, 156–57;—urges, to search for Sītā, 335, 338–39;—warns, about golden deer, 310;—warns, of arrival of Bharata's army, 234–36; lament of, for Sītā, 13, 333–35, 385, 543–44;—for Lakṣmaṇa, 589–90, 687–88; Lava and Kuśa (*see* Kuśa; Lava; Rāma: sons of, as disciples of Vālmīki *this entry*); Lavaṇa and (*see* Lavaṇa); learns of Daśaratha's death, 241; leaves Ayodhyā with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, 11, 172–74; lies wounded on bed of arrows, 585, 590–91; life span of, complete, 849; like madman from grief over Sītā, 334–35; lives with Lakṣmaṇa in cave during rainy season, 380–81; love for Sītā, 129; madness of, 13, 336–38, 843; Mālyavān counsels Rāvaṇa to make peace with, 570–72; manliness of, 357–58; marches southward with army, 540–42; Mārīca as golden deer lures, into forest, 13, 312–13;—cries for help in voice of, 13, 313;—praises, 304;—recalls previous encounter with, 305–7; marriage of, to Sītā, 11, 123–25; married life of, 791; matted locks (hair) of, 144, 150, 155, 186, 222, 238, 247, 265, 284, 719; —abandoned, 724; Māyā as immemorial consort of, 854; meets Jaṭāyus, 279–81;—Sugrīva, 13, 356;—Sugrīva on Mount Prasravaṇa [Mālyavān], 395–96; ministers of, 800, 820–21, 853;—consulted, 850–51; monkey army leaders advise, on Vibhīṣaṇa, 549–51;—protects, and Lakṣmaṇa, 586–87; monkeys report Sītā's condition to, 531–32;—seek refuge with, 605, 624, 626, 636; as most central and compelling character in the epic, 20; mothers of, ascend to heaven, 845; mourns Daśaratha's death, 241–43; must rescue Sita himself, 491, 495, 522, 535; Nārada describes practices of social classes in *yugas*, 821–22;—explains untimely death of child to, 18, 821;—narrates adventures of, to Vālmīki, 9, 51–54; not mentioned as incarnation of Viṣṇu in *upodghāta*, 9; as object of emulation, 20–21; observes Sītā's pregnancy, 791; offers to consecrate Lakṣmaṇa as prince regent, 726; as one of true vows, 850–51; orders Lakṣmaṇa to abandon Sītā, 794–97;—Sītā to be proven innocent publicly, 710;—Vibhīṣaṇa to bring Sītā, 705;—Vibhīṣaṇa to perform Rāvaṇa's funerary rites, 30, 701–2; people of Ayodhyā lament exile of, 166–67, 173–75, 180–81; poetic fame deserved by, 844; posts troops at gates of Laṅkā, 573–74; power of illusion of, 700; Pratardana as ally of, 787; prepares for siege, 540, 576;—to leave for forest, 165–75;—troop leaders to attack Laṅkā, 577–78; *purohita*(*s*) of (see *purohita*(*s*): of Rāma); Puṣpaka and, 722, 789–90, 822 (*see also* Puṣpa/Puṣpaka(vimāna)); questions Vibhīṣaṇa about Kumbhakarṇa, 613; rage of, at loss of Sītā, 336–38, 843–44; rages against earth goddess (Vasudhā), 843–44; Raghu as ancestor of, 36; Rāvaṇa and (*see also* Rāvaṇa); Rāvaṇa hears of death of Khara, Dūṣaṇa, and Triśiras by, 300;—reviles,

303, 466, 469;—vows to destroy, by abducting Sītā, 13, 303–4; Rāvaṇa's appearance impresses, 604; reaches Lañkā, 577; rebukes Lakṣmaṇa, 331–33; recognizes Lava and Kuśa as his sons and Sītā's sons, 10, 19, 841; as refuge of all, 214, 338, 549, 552, 605, 613, 636, 675, 830, 854; refuses to enter Kiṣkindhā, 379–80; regards world as empty, 844; rejects Sītā as unfaithful, 707; releases Rāvaṇa's spies, 556, 563; reminds Kausalyā of wifely duty, 24, 157–58; removes and breaks Rāvaṇa's javelin, 687; repudiates and rejects Sītā, 15, 706–707; rescues Sītā from Virādha, 267; residence of, on Mount Prasravaṇa (Mālyavān), 381; resumes trappings of royalty, 723–24; reunion of, with queen mothers, 723;—with Sītā, 705–11; as role model, 5, 17; romantic interlude of, with Sītā in *aśoka* grove, 790–91; royal lineages established by, 799; Śabarī welcomes, and Lakṣmaṇa, 348; sacrifices of, 17–19, 191;—*agniṣṭoma* and *atirātra*, 845;—*aśvamedha* (see *aśvamedha*);—*pauṇḍarīka*, 726;—performed by, for thousands of years, 845;—*vājapeya*, 726, 845; sages assembled at court of, 728, 807, 844; Saṃpāti assists, 24, 418; *sandhyā* rites of, 137, 182–83, 187, 223, 270, 544, 829; Śārdūla describes capture of spies and forces of, 563–64;—describes, to Rāvaṇā, 564; Śatrughna and (*see* Śatrughna); saves Sītā from crow, 492–93, 496; —recalled, 533–34; sees omens, 330–33, 576, 695;—vision of Indra, 267; sends Sugrīva back to Kiṣkindhā, 788–89; —Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā into hiding, 291; —Lakṣmaṇa to confront Indrajit, 661; —Lakṣmaṇa to exhort Sugrīva, 386–87; —Śatrughna to fight and kill Lavaṇa, 17–18, 809–10;—Śatrughna back to Madhurā, 18, 819–20; sets out for Mount Ṛśyamūka, 56, 352; shatters lance of Rāvaṇa with javelin, 691; sight of, will allay grief, 219; signet ring of (*see* signet ring); simulacra of head and bow of, 564–68; Sītā begs, for golden deer, 310–11;—exhorts Lakṣmaṇa to find, 313–14;—implores, to take her to Daṇḍaka forest, 161–63;—laments believing, dead, 566–67,—laments recalling, 473–75, 477–78; Sītā rebukes harsh treatment and accusations of, 707–708;—refuses to touch male other than, 491;—takes ring of, 14, 487, 522;—warns, of perils of violence, 271–72; Sītā's devotion to, 442, 460, 462–63, 464, 465, 467, 477, 491, 524, (*see also* Sītā); slaying of Khara's army by, recalled, 52, 300, 301, 327, 460, 677; as son of Aditi, 849; sons of, as disciples of Vālmīki, 6, 10, 17–18, 57, 839–41;—as reflections of Rāma, 840;—perform the *Rāmāyaṇa* for Rāma, 19, 58, 839–41; —Vālmīki teaches, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, 6, 10, 57 (*see also* Kuśa; Lava); splits seven sāla trees as demonstration of skill, 363–64; —recalled, 366, 393; stoicism of, 11; story of, known to Vālmīki, 56–57; stuns Mārīca with arrow, 10, 83, 306; suffering of, 798; Sugrīva challenges, to split *sāla* trees, 53, 363–64;—consoles, 357–58, 530–31;—enumerates monkeys to, 396; —narrates conflict with Vālin to, 13, 26, 359–63, 408;—promises to search for and recover Sītā, 13, 357;—reassures, 537–38; Śuka and Sāraṇa describe, to Rāvaṇa, 556–57, 561; Sumantra delivers message of, to Daśaratha, 192–94; summons Sītā to assembly, 841–43; as Supreme Being, Lord, Soul, or Spirit, 4, 20, 40, 475, 709–12 790; Śūrpaṇakhā asks Rāvaṇa to kill, 301; —seduces, 12, 33, 284–85; takes no wife after Sītā, 845; teases Śūrpaṇakhā, 285; tells story of Ila/Ilā story, 833–37;—of Nimi, 802–5;—of Nṛga, 800–802;—of Yadu, 805–7; threatens cosmic destruction, 337–38; tours Citrakūṭa and Mandākinī with Sītā, 232–34;—travels from Lañkā to Ayodhyā from Puṣpaka with Sītā, 715–16; unable to distinguish Vālin from Sugrīva, 364–65;—to find and recover Sītā without Sugrīva, 25; Vālin rebukes for killing, 26, 369–70;—begs forgiveness from, 372; Vasiṣṭha instructs, and Sītā prior to the consecration 136; Vibhīṣaṇa advises, to solicit aid of Samudra, 553;—lends Puṣpaka to, 31, 713–14;—takes refuge (*śaraṇam*) with, 31, 549, 551–52; visits Agastya's brother, 275–76;—Atri, 259–63;—visits Śarabhañga, 268;—Sutīkṣṇa, 52, 56, 269–71, 274–75; Viṣṇu's bow and, 127–28; Viśvāmitra gives weapons-spells to, 10, 80–81;—requests aid of, 10, 71–75, 305; vital points (vitals) of, pierced by Indrajit's arrows, 584–85; vow of, to annihilate Sītā's abductor, 511;—to Kāla, 848, 850–51; vows to kill Rāvaṇa, 687;—to kill Vālin, 13, 25, 53, 359, 361, 486;—to protect seers of Daṇḍaka forest, 271, 273;—weapon-spells of, 561, 588, 653, 676;—deployed against Indrajit, 654–55;—deployed against Kumbhakarṇa, 626–627;—deployed against Rāvaṇa, 684, 685, 689–90, 692–93, 698; —weapons of, take on human form,

853; welcomes Durvāsas, 850; wears clothing of ascetic, 11, 170, 171 (*see also* barkcloth garments); will go to Brahmaloka, 54, 799; world regarded as empty by, 844; Yudhājit dispatches Gārgya as messenger to, 845–46
Rāma Jāmadagnya, 11; as *avatāra* (incarnation) of Viṣṇu, 21;encounter of, with Rāma 126–28; exterminates kshatriyas, 126–27; obeys father's command to kill mother, 154
Rāmakathā ("Tale of Rāma"), 3; representations of Śūrpaṇakhā in, 33
Rāmarājya: Gandhi on, 42; Rāma inaugurates, 5–6, 16; as utopian reign, 17–18, 42
Rāma story: foretold, 422;—recalled 284, 316–17; 329, 355, 480–82, 510;—Rāma recaps, during return journey, 715–16
Rāmāyaṇa: as cautionary tale, 5, 41; as cultural work, 47; consecration of Rāma ends some versions of, 16; Jain versions of, 5n, 36; legacy of, 41–43; as morality play, 5; political history of, 35; popularity of in religious cultures of Asia, 5(n); reception of, 20; in religious history of Hinduism, 40; versions of, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9–10, 16, 19, 27, 33, 36, 37, 42, 43, 46–47; See also *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*
Rambhā (*apsaras*): Indra sends, to seduce Viśvāmitra, 115–16; Kubera Vaiśravaṇa curses Virādha because of, 267; Nalakūbara confirms story of, 767; Rāvaṇa rapes, 766–67; reports rape to Nalakūbara, 767; Viśvāmitra curses, 118
Rambha (monkey troop leader): arrival of, in Kiṣkindhā, 397; lives in Sahya mountains, 558; number of troops of, 397, 558–59, 574, 587, 622
Rāmcaritmānas, 43
Rāmlīlā: reenacted annually in India, 6
Rāmopakhyāna ("The Secondary Narrative of Rāma"): as version of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 36
rape: of Ahalyā, by Indra, 774; of *apsaras* Rambhā by Rāvaṇa, 766–68; of Arajā by Daṇḍa, 827–28; common to all men, 774
Rasātala (underworld), 53, 92, 356, 517, 546, 569, 655, 817; Hanumān pushes Mount Ariṣṭa into, 517; *rākṣasas* flee to, 731, 740, 744, 817; Rāvaṇa goes to, 760–61;—goes to, recalled, 545;—prepares to go to, 757; Sītā enters, 843; sons of Sagara tear up, 92; Sumālin and advisors come up from, 744; Sumālin leaves, 740. *See also* Pātāla
Raśmiketu (*rākṣasa*), 443, 547; Rāma fights and kills, 581
Rati (goddess of pleasure): Sītā compared to, 315; wife of god of love, 315, 459
Rāvaṇa: abducted women curse, 16, 30, 762–63; abducts daughters of serpents, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, men, *daityas*, and *dānavas*, 5, 16, 762–63;—Sītā, 12–15, 24, 52, 320–27, 355, 357, 429; accuses Mālyavān of treachery and humiliates him, 572; acquires epithet, "Rāvaṇa," 30, 752;—ninety-nine powers of illusion, 761; admonishes Mārīca, 307–8; Agastya narrates genealogy and history of, 16–17, 729–82; aims javelin at Vibhīṣaṇa, 686; alliance of, with Nivātakavacas, 761;—with Vālin, 26, 782; alternative title of poem foregrounds, 3, 57, 354; Anaraṇya curses, 16, 756; Aṅgada tells Saṃpāti about fight of, with Jaṭāyus, 417–18; —attacks palace of, 579; appearance of, impresses Rāma, 604; approaches and meets Sītā in ashram, 315–17; Arjuna Kārtavīrya defeats, 16, 26, 30, 780; —fights and captures, 779–80;—fights ministers of, 778–79;—Rāma, fights Rāvaṇa, 608–9, 684–85, 687, 689–98; asks Brahmā for immortality, 743; —Mārīca to aid in abduction of Sītā, 52, 303–4;—guise of brahman ascetic, 13, 314–17;—true form, 319–20; attempts to lift mountain 30 35, 363; austerities of, 29, 299, 444, 742–43; bathes in Narmadā, 776; battles gods, 768–73;—Kubera and *yakṣas*, 749–51; begs Kumbhakarṇa to drive off the enemy army, 615;—to save him, 616–17; birth of, 28–29, 741; —accompanied by dire omens, 28–29; boasts of his power to Sītā, 318–19, 754; boon of, 10, 24, 68–69, 74, 636–37, 649, 742–43, 745, 768, 772, 779; Brahmā grants boon to, 68, 74;—protects, from Yama, 760;—stops auto-decapitation of, 299, 742–43;—tells, to release Indra, 773; —proposes alliance between, and Nivātakavacas, 760–61;—restores heads of, 743; —tells Yama not to strike, 760; briefs Kumbhakarṇa on battle, 615; brings abducted women to Laṅkā, 763; broods upon hearing the sound of the monkey army, 570; cannibalism of, 330, 468,

474, 754;—of ministers of, 748, 778; cannot be slain without an ally, 392; challenges Vālin to battle, 781; charriot battle of, with Rāma, 689–98, 695–98; chariot of, fashioned through power of illusion, 320; claims Prahasta has beheaded Rāma, 565; comes to abode of Varuṇa, 761; conquers city of Aśmanagara, 761; —Kubera, 318, 446, 299, 545, 749–51;—the serpents, 760; as conquistador, 5, 749–51, 755–56, 758–62, 768–73; consecration of, as lord of *rākṣasas*, 745–46; consults his ministers, 544–45, 564; cremation of, 720; crimes of, 299; cursed to die on account of a woman,16, 762; cuts off heads as offering, 299; Daśagrīva, "Ten–necked," as birth name of, 30, 752; death of, 3, 5, 15, 21, 30, 53, 56, 698; deeds of, recounted, 545–46; defeat of, presaged in Trijaṭā's dream, 476; defeats Indra and the gods, 773; defiler of sacred rites, 5; delighted with Indrajit, 586; delusion of, 693; description of palace complex of, 443–46, 453;—of wives and consorts of, 29–30, 446–450; descriptions of, 27–30, 299–300, 448–49, 509, 604; 673; destroys Nandana and other gardens, 748–49; Dhānyamālinī diverts, from Sītā, 470; dismissal of, in battle by Rāma, 15, 30, 609; dispatches *rākṣasa* leaders Dhūmrākṣa and Akampana, 594, 596;—Prahasta, 745;—*rākṣasas*, 327–28;—spies, 555–56, 562; distressed at revival of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 594; diverted by Dhānyamālinī, 470; does not die from multiple beheadings, 697; drinking hall of, described, 451; each of monkeys vows to kill, 407; effigy of, burned at *Rāmlīlā*, 6; elements fear, 68, 315, 318–19, 776; encounter of, with Vālin, 16, 26, 27, 30, 370, 781–82; encounters Nandīśvara, 751; enemy of Indra, 69; enlists aid of Mārīca, 13, 303–09;—Madhu as ally, 766; enmity of, with Kubera, 29, 742–51; exchanges words and blows with Hanumān, 605–6; excoriates Vibhīṣaṇa, 31, 548 exhausted in battle, 609, 693–94, 773; faints at news of Kumbhakarṇa's death, 628; falls at Sītā's feet, 521;—into stupor, 672; fate impels, 52, 318, 329, 548–49, 629, 679, 693; feats of, described, 299; feeds slain messenger to *rākṣasas*, 748; fells monkey champions, 605; fights and fells Nīla, 606–7;—sons and grandsons of Varuṇa, 761–62;—Sugrīva, 605; fights and kills Anaraṇya, 755–56;—Anaraṇya, 756; fights and vanquishes Marutta, 754; Nivātakavacas;—760; serpents, 760; fights Arjuna Kārtavīrya, 775–79; —Indra, 771–73;—Jaṭāyus, 322–23; —Jaṭāyus, recalled, 417–18;—Kubera, 573; —Lakṣmaṇa, 607–8;—Vaivasvata, 757–60; —Yama, Kāla, and Mṛtyu, 757–60; final battle of, with Rāma, 695–98; foresees his own destruction, 579; forges nonaggression pact with Arjuna, 780; fraternal conflict of, with Vibhīṣaṇa, 26, 29, 548, 741; from flying chariot, views earth, 302–3; funerary rites of, 28, 30, 34,702; genealogy of, 74, 731–41; gifts Kumbhakarṇa jewels and garlands, 620; gives Śūrpaṇakhā in marriage to Vidyujjihva, 746;—ultimatum to Sītā, 468, 521; gods complain to Brahmā about, 68;—eager for destruction of, 254;—etc., incarnate as monkeys to aid in defeat of, 24, 70–71; goes forth to war with Mahodara, Mahāpārśva and Virūpākṣa, 679; goes to Bhogavatī, 760;—Kāilāsa, 299, 545, 749–51; Maṇimatī, 760;—Rasātala, 760–61; goes with Mārīca to Rāma's ashram, 52, 309; grief of, 594, 603, 610, 628–29, 640, 651, 672–74, 683; in guise of brahman mendicant praises Sītā in sexual terms, 13, 315–16; Hanumān brought before, 14, 508–9;—dazzled by splendor of, 509;—fears Sītā might mistake him for, 479;—fights and stuns, 608;—observes closely, 464;—reports his confrontation with, to monkeys, 523; —reviles, 14, 510–12;—searches inner apartments of, 56, 452–53, 520, 531–32, 546, 452;—searches palace of, 442–45; sees, 449, 451;—vows to bind and bring, 430;—warns, of destruction, 511;—urges, to return Sītā to Rāma, 511–12; Hanumān's destruction of *aśoka* grove enrages, 499; harasses divine beings, 747; has *rākṣasa* women take Sītā to see Rāma's body, 587; has Vidyujihva show illusory head of Rāma to Sītā, 565–66; hears of Akampana's (1) death, 599;—hears of death of Khara, Dūṣaṇa, and Triśiras, 300; holds forth on types of men, 544–45; holds Sītā captive, 13, 330–705; hurls lance at Rāma, 691;—javelin at Vibhīṣaṇa, 686; in guise of brahman ascetic, 314–17; in guise of mendicant, assumes true form, 319–20;—of mendicant, praises Sītā in sexual terms, 13, 315–16;—reveals identity to Sītā, 317; Indra requests Viṣṇu to kill 10, 768; inhabits Laṅkā as lord of, 745, 746, 747, 748, 757; inner apartments of, 23, 33, 327–28, 450, 452, 466, 470–71, 472 747, 572, 699, 765, 782; intones

mantras, 776; invincibility of, through boon, 10, 24, 68–69, 74, 636–37, 649, 742–43, 745, 768, 772, 779; invokes the serpent weapon-spell of the *rākṣasas*, 690; invokes weapon-spell of the *asuras*, 684;—weapon-spell of Maya, 685; invulnerability of, to supernatural beings, 10, 743; Jain representations of, 36; Jaṭāyus admonishes, 321–22;—challenges, to battle, 321;—destroys flying chariot of, 322–23;—reviles, 321–23;—fights, 322–23; javelin, Maya gives to, 691; —of Indra shatters lance of, 691;—of, forged by Maya, 686; of, Rāma removes and breaks, 687;—of, strikes down Lakṣmaṇa, 686–87; justification for his evil nature, 28; Kaikasī counsels, with ministers, 570;—incites sibling envy of, 29, 742; kills four hundred Kālakeya *daityas*, 761;—husband of Śūrpaṇakhā, 29, 763; —messenger of Kubera, 748;—monkeys, 679–80;—troops of Yama, 758–59; —Vidyujjihva, 29, 33, 763; Kubera half-brother of, 29, 742, 744; Kumbhakarṇa lectures, on statecraft (*nītiśāstra*), 31, 615–16; laments for Indrajit, 672–73; —for Kumbhakarṇa, 629; liberates condemned souls, 758; lineage and adventures of, 74, 728–82; makes Dūṣaṇa chief of Khara's army, 763; makes his first sortie, 603; Mālyavān advises, to make peace, 571–72; marches to Madhu's city, 765; Mārīca foretells death of, 306;—rebukes, 308–9;—tells, of his past encounters with Rāma, 305–7;—urges, to consult with Vibhīṣaṇa, 305;—warns, 52, 304–6; marries Mandodarī, 746;—Śūrpaṇakhā to Vidyujjihva, 746; master of weapon-spells, 738; Maya forges javelin for, 686;—gives, Mandodarī in marriage, 545; meaning of epithet of, 30; meets Meghanāda in the Nikumbhilā grove, 764;—Nārada, 756; ministers flatter, 545–46; ministers of, 744, 749, 751, 752, 758, 761, 765, 769, 776, 778, 781–82;—battle guardians of the underworld, 758;—boast of their abilities, 546–47;—kill sons and grandsons of Varuṇa, 761;—reassure, of safety, 545–46;—report death of Indrajit to, 672; —slaughter Arjuna's ministers, 778 (*see also* Dhūmrākṣa; Mahodara; Mārīca; Prahasta; Sāraṇa, Śuka); mocks Mahodara, 619;—Nandīśvara, 751; molests Vedavatī, 21–22, 752–54; mortally wounds Jaṭāyus, 13, 24, 323, 341; Mṛtyu asks to kill, 759; Nalakūbara curses, 16, 767–68; Nandīśvara curses, 16, 24, 751–52; Nārada praises valor of, 756; Niśākara foresees abduction of Sītā by, 422; number of forces of, six million, 573; number of subjects of, more than three hundred twenty million, 328; objects to Meghanāda's sacrifices, 764; offering of, to Śiva, 776; offers heads as oblations, 299, 742; —Sītā sovereignty over Laṅkā, 328; omens appear at birth of, 29;—presage defeat of, 695; on the nature of kings, 307; only two mortal beings ever defeat, 26; oppresses gods and sages, 10, 69;—kshatriyas, 752; —the three worlds, 74; orders capture of Indra, 772;—construction of sleeping chamber for Kumbhakarṇa, 747; —Dhūmrākṣa to lead a sortie, 594; —Hanumān paraded through Laṅkā, 513; —Hanumān's execution, 511;—Hanumān's tail set on fire, 513;—Indrajit into battle, 653;—Khara to rule the Daṇḍaka forest, 763;—*kiṃkaras* to capture Hanumān, 499; —Kumbhakarṇa to march forth accompanied by an army, 620;—Mahodara, Mahāpārśva and Virūpākṣa, to send forth more troops, 678;—Mārīca to take form of golden deer, 303–4, 308;—Prahasta to lead a sortie, 599;—Prahasta to question Hanumān, 510;—*rākṣasa* women to pressure Sītā, 470;—*rākṣasa* women to guard Sītā, 327, 330;—*rākṣasas* to awaken Kumbhakarṇa, 610;—*rākṣasas* to capture and kill Aṅgada, 579;—Vidyujihva to create illusion of Rāma's severed head and his bow, 564; places Sītā in *aśoka* grove under guard of fearsome *rākṣasa* women, 330; plans to conquer three worlds, 757;—the world guardians, 757; popular representations of, 42; positions *rākṣasa* chiefs to defend Laṅkā, 572; power of, 299; power(s) of illusion of, 341, 545–46, 685, 693, 696, 751, 761; praises Vālin, 782; prepares to go to Rasātala, 757; presses Rāma hard in battle, 690; proclaims victory over Yama, 760; Pulastya orders Arjuna to release, 779–80; Puṣpaka(vimāṇa) of, described, 445–46 (*see also* Puṣpa/Puṣpaka(vimāna): Rāvaṇa); questions Śuka and Sāraṇa, 557; radical opposite of Rāma, 28; rage of, at death of Indrajit, 673; *rākṣasa* women report Hanumān to, 499; Rāma destroys rākṣasa army of, 15, 676;—deploys weapons spells against, 684, 685, 689–90, 692–93, 698; —dismisses, from battle, 15, 30, 609;—kills, 15, 698;—orders funeral of, 30, 702;—orders Sugrīva to search for and kill, 358, 380, 398–99;—praises, 702; —sends warning to, via Śuka and Sāraṇa, 556;—shatters

lance of, with javelin, 691; —vows to kill, 687; Rāma's expression of fraternal feelings for, 30, 702;—treatment of, 30, 609, 702; rapes *apsaras* Rambhā, 766–68; ravages heavenly gardens, 747; realizes his failures, 28, 616;—the fortunes of war have turned against him, 681;—that Lakṣmaṇa is a portion of Viṣṇu, 608; recalls his vulnerability to humans, 609; receives intelligence on the forces of his enemy, 557–61; redirects huge javelin at Lakṣmaṇa, 686; refuses to return Sītā, 563, 570, 572; regrets his failure to heed advice of Vibhīṣaṇa, 629;—his treatment of Vibhīṣaṇa, 629; resolves to destroy Rāma by abducting Sītā, 13, 304;—to kill Sītā, 673; reviles Rāma, 303, 466, 469;—Śuka and Sāraṇa, 562;—Vibhīṣaṇa as a traitor, 548; riddles Mātali with arrows, 690; rushes upon Sītā with sword drawn, 674; Saṃpāti (vulture) reveals identification and location of, 418–19; scorches monkeys with Tāmasa weapon-spell, 683; seeks alliance with Madhu, 545;—counsel from *rākṣasas*, 544–45; sends Akampana into battle, 596;—Akṣa and an army to capture Hanumān, 503–4; —his brothers Mahodara and Mahāpārśva to guard sons, 630;—Indrajit against Hanumān, 506;—Jamumālin to fight Hanumān, 499–500;—Khara and Dūṣana to Daṇḍaka forest, 763–64;—*kiṃkaras* against Hanumān, 499; Kumbha and Nikumbha into battle, 647;—Makarākṣa to kill Rāma, 651;—*rākṣasas* to isolate and kill Rāma, 675;—seven sons of minister against Hanumān, 501;—sons off to battle, 630;—Śuka and Sāraṇa to spy on Rāma and monkey army, 555–57; —Śūrpaṇakhā to Daṇḍaka forest, 33, 763–64; severed heads of, reappear, 697; sexual predator, 5, 21, 28; shows Sītā his palace, 328;—illusion of Rāma's head and bow, 565–66; Sītā admonishes, 467–68; —foretells destruction of, 474;—foretells doom of, 329–30;—offers hospitality to, 316;—rebukes, for abduction, 325–26; —rejects advances of, 317–19;—reviles, 318–20, 326, 329–30, 467–69; Śiva crushes arms of, under mountain, 30, 752;—gives name, "Rāvaṇa," to Daśagrīva, 752;—pleased with, 30, 752; sons of, offer to take up the battle, 630;—engage in great battle with monkeys, 631;—set out with a vast host, 630–31; speaks Sanskrit like a brahman, 479; spies report to, 564; steals Puṣpaka, 299, 545, 751; strikes Hanumān with arrows, 609; strikes down Indra's horses, 690;—Lakṣmaṇa with javelin, 686;—Lakṣmaṇa with lance, 408; —Lakṣmaṇa's arrows, 683–64;—and defeats Kubera, 751; stuns Hanumān, 606; subjugates Kubera, 545; Sugrīva sends out monkeys to search for, 398–408;—vows to kill, 357, 392; Saṃpāti (vulture) reports witnessing abduction by, 419–20; Supārśva (*rākṣasa*) dissuades, from killing Sītā; Śūrpaṇakhā asks, to kill Rāvaṇa, 301;describes Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā to, 300–301; —incites, to take revenge, 300–302; —reports death of Khara and Dūṣaṇa to, 299;—reports events in Daṇḍaka forest, 299–30;—reproaches, 763; Śūrpaṇakhā's report enrages, 300; surveys Rāma's army, 557; takes possession of Lañkā, 744–46, 757; takes Sītā to and shows Lañkā, 327–28; tears up Śaravana, 752; tells Hanumān to return Sītā, 511–12;—Sītā Rāma is dead, 565; ten heads of, 741; terrorizes worlds, 5, 299, 742; "thorn (in the side) of the world (*lokakaṇṭaka*)," 18, 69; threatens to kill Sītā, 14, 330, 468–69; threatens Mārīca, 32, 308; tries to kill Sītā, 674–75; tries to woo Sītā, 328–29, 465–67; Trijaṭā foretells downfall of, 475–76; unable to lift Lakṣmaṇa, 608; unable to pass over place of Śiva's dalliance, 751; Vālin captures, 26, 30, 781; Vedavatī refuses to curse, 753; Vibhīṣaṇa advises, to return Sītā, 547–48;—dissuades, from Hanumān's execution, 512–13;—performs funerary rites for, 30, 701–2; visits Mārīca, 303; —Sītā in *aśoka* grove, 463–70; Viṣṇu incarnates to kill, 10, 69–70, 710; Viśravas curses, 16, 29, 33, 741;—to avenge the deaths of kinsmen, 678;—to conquer heaven, 765;—to destroy Rāma by abducting Sītā, 13, 303–4;—to equal or surpass Kubera, 29, 742;—to kill Madhu, 765;—to kill Rāma, 13, 327, 675;—never to give up Sītā, 557;—to subjugate Indra, 765; weapons of, infused with power of illusion, 696; weapon-spells of, 758; wives and courtesans of, described, 446–52; —sympathize with Sītā, 468, 470; woos Sītā, 320; 328–29, 465–66; worships golden *liñga*, 776; wounds Jaṭāyus, 323

Rāvaṇavadha: also known as *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, 41

Rāvaṇi. *See* Indrajit

Ravi. *See* Sūrya

Ṛcīka: husband of Satyavatī, 86; sells his son Śunaḥśepa, 113; and Śunaḥśeha story, 113–14; Viṣṇu gives bow to, 127
rebirth. *See* reincarnation
recensions: of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 7–9, 40, 44, 45
recitation (*parāyaṇa*). See *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*: recitation of
reincarnation: Vedavatī as, of Sītā, 21, 753–54. *See also* birth(s)
religious history: of Hinduism in *Mahābhārata*, 40;—in *Rāmāyaṇa*, 40
Reṇukā (mother of Rāma Jāmadagnya): Rāma Jāmadagnya kills, 154
righteousness (*dharma*), 5, 17, 20, 27, 40, 164, 167, 177, 850. *passim*; adherence to, by Rāma, 11; consists in speaking truth, 659; discourses on by Kumbhakarṇa, 615–16; by Lakṣmaṇa, 658–60; by Mālyavān, 570–72; by Rāma, 238–41; 272–73; 370–72, *passim*;—by Sītā, 270–72; by Vālin, 369–70; as highest form of compassion, 493; of kshatriyas, 154, 271–73; of Kuśanābha's daughters, 85; meanings and translations of, 46; as quality of Rāvaṇa. 567;—of Viṣṇu, 709; not shown by Nimi toward Vasiṣṭha, 805; as the very essence of this world, 272; virtues of, 85, 369; of women, 157–58, 161, 162–63, 172, 197, 109, 260; in *yuga* theory, 37
ring. *See* signet ring
rites: *abhijit*, 68; *agnihotra*, 28, 87, 104, 105, 119, 174, 189, 211, 229, 262, 268, 306, 567, 571, 741, 786, 853; *agniṣṭoma*, 567, 764, 845, 853; for ancestors, 124, 249; *aptoryāma*, 68; *atirātra*, 67, 68, 645, 845; *āyus*, 68; *bali*, 105; benedictory, 678, 748; birth, 813; for funerals (*see* funerary rites); *gosava*, 845; *homa*, 105; *jyotiṣṭoma*, 68; lunar, 271; morning, 284; *śrāddha*, 213, 215, 275–76; *vājapeya*, 178, 726, 845; *viśvajit*, 68; water libations as, 76, 87, 283, 379, 419. See also *aśvamedha*; sacrifice(s); *vaiṣṇava* sacrifice
ritual consecration: golden image of Sītā as fit for, 838; of Marutta, 754; of Nimi, 802, 804, 805. *See also* royal consecration
ritual offerings, 66, 84, 87, 105, 111, 263, 264, 435, 641; crows eat, 419, 492
Ṛkṣa: cave of, 56
ṛkṣa(*s*): Jāmbavān king of, 27; in later versions interpreted to be a bear, 27; rendered as ape, 47. *See also* apes
Ṛkṣarajas: adoptive father of Sugrīva, 350, 563, 624, 786; adoptive father of Vālin, 786; king of the mountains, 786; monkey lord, 417, 786; prohibits entrance into Madhuvana, 528; son of Sūrya, 346
roadbuilding, 216–17, 721
rod: of doom, 639; of Kāla, 749, 759–60, 769;—Brahmā creator of, 760; of Mṛtyu, 322, 546; of punishment, 264, 452, 512, 578, 826–27;—king wields, 264; of Yama, 108, 650, 801, 803, 829
Rohiṇī (consort of the moon), 256, 285, 315, 320, 392, 459, 463, 464, 481, 490, 496, 674, 690, 701, 703, 720; example of wifely obedience, 260
Rohiṇī (daughter of Surabhi): mother of cows, 280
Rohitas (clan of *gandharvas*): guard forest of Ṛṣabha, 402
role: of Agastya in *Uttarakāṇḍa*, 16–17, 19, 26, 29; of Śatrughna in epic, 23; of Śūrpaṇakhā in epic, 33
role model(s): characters in Rāmāyaṇa as, 5, 20, 37; Daśaratha as, 13; Rāma as, 5, 17; Sītā as, 22, 42
Romapāda (king of Aṅga), 61, 63, 64, 66; ministers of, 61–2; *purohita*(s) of (see *purohita*(s): of Romapāda not named)
royal consecration: Ayodhyā readied for Rāma's, 136–38; of Aṅgada as crown prince, 380–81; of Aṅgada and Candraketu, 847; of Kuśa and Lava, 851–52; of Pūru by Yayāti, 807; priests prepare for Rāma's, 146–47; of Rāma as king, 16, 725–26; of Rāma ends some versions of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 19; Rāma wishes for Bharata, 851; of Rāvaṇa as lord of *rākṣasas*, 745–46; of Śatrughna, 809–10; of Śatrughna's sons Śatrughātin and Subāhu, 852; of Sugrīva, 360, 379–80; of Śveta, 825; of Śveta's

brother, 825; of Vasu, 801; of Vibhīṣaṇa as king of Laṅkā, 15, 31, 552, 561, 702–3; Vaṣiṣtha urges Bharata to undergo, 218. *See also* ritual consecration

royal duty. *See rājadharma*

Ṛṣabha (monkey troop leader), 540–41, 584, 587, 605, 622, 722; appointed to guard army's right flank, 540; brings water for Rāma's consecration, 725; fight and kills Mahāpārśva (younge brother of Rāvaṇa), 635; Kaikeyī embraces, 722; Kumbhakarṇa crushes, 623; member of the southern search party, 400; one of "five tigers among monkeys," who rushes Kumbhakarṇa, 623; posted at southern gate, 577

Ṛṣabha (mountain), 399, 643, 645; sandalwood grows on, 401–2

ṛṣi(s) (seer[s]): omniscient vision of, 4, 39

Ṛṣyamūka (mountain), 356, 358, 354, 361, 365; ashram of Mataṅga on, 408; located east of Pampā, 347; Hanumān goes from, to Malaya, 356; Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa set out for, 56, 352; Rāma meets Sugrīva on, 510, 523; Sugrīva dwells on, 346, 347, 349–50, 352, 358, 485;—recalled 677; Vālin cursed not to enter, 363–64, 408

Rśyaśṛṅga: performs *aśvamedha*, 10, 66–68; performs son-producing sacrifice, 10, 68–69; seduction of, 61–63; sets out with Śāntā, 71; travels to Āyodhyā, 63–64

Ṛtadhāman: Rāma as, 709

Rudra: Rāma as, 709. *See also* Śiva

Rudras, 280, 315, 403, 455, 481, 709, 768, 770, 771, 842

rum, 451, 646

Rumā (wife of Sugrīva), 374, 392, 408, 416, 454; daughter-in-law of Vālin, 371; recovered, 381; Sugrīva embraces, 391

Śabalā (wish-fulfilling cow): as gift of Nṛga, 800–801; provides offerings to ancestors, 105; of Vaṣiṣtha, 105–6

Śabarī (ascetic woman): asceticism of, 347–48; ashram of, 348; immolation and ascent of, to heaven, 349; Kabandha directs Rāma to ashram of, 53, 346–47; meeting of Rāma with, 53, 56, 348–40; social status of, 41; welcomes Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 348

Śacī (Paulomī): Anuhlāda abducts (comparison), 396; daughter of Puloman, wife of Indra, 396–97, 490; Indra abducts, 308, 319; Jayanta son of, 770; lord of (*see* Indra); stolen from Indra, 319

sacrifice(s) (*yajñas*), 10, 32, 29; of Ambarīṣa, 113–14; of Bali, 424; of Dakṣa, 292, 338; to a home, 191; of Ila, 837; of Indra (*see* Indra: *aśvamedha* of; *see* Indra: performs *vaiṣṇava* sacrifice); of Indrajit (*see* Indrajit: sacrifice(s)) of Janaka, (*see* Janaka: sacrifice of); for Maheśvara, 395; of Marutta (*see* Marutta: *aśvamedha* performed by; Marutta: sacrifices to Śiva); of Mitrasaha (*see* Mitrasaha Saudāsa: sacrifice of); of Nimi (*see* Nimi: Gautama performs sacrifice for); offerings from, not reused, 196; *rākṣasas* engage in, 440, 443; *rākṣasas*' portion at, 176; of Rāma, 17–19, 845, (*see also* Rāma: sacrifices of); ritual, 40; of Sagara (*see* Sagara: *aśvamedha* sacrifice of); son-producing, of Brahmadatta, 86;—of Daśaratha, 10, 68–70; of Triśaṅku (*see* Triśaṅku: Viśvāmitra performs sacrifice for); vedic, 10, 32; vedic, in Laṅkā, 443; of Viśvāmitra (*see* Viśvāmitra,:sacrifice[s)] of). See also *agniṣṭoma*; *aśvamedha*; *bahusuvarṇaka*; *maheśvara*; *rājasūya*; rites; *vaiṣṇava* sacrifice

Sagara (king of the Ikṣvākus), 122, 252, 432, *passim*; *aśvamedha* sacrifice of, 91–92; boon of, 90; sons of, 90–96—Kaikeyī recounts story of, to Daśaratha, 170; obey father's command, 154; story of, 90–94; unable to bring Ganges to earth, 96

Sāgara (Samudra) (god of the ocean): appears before Rāma, 554; proposes that Nala should construct a bridge, 554; Rāma assaults, 553–54;—causes to manifest, 553–54;—petitions, 553; —solicits help of, 553; seeks to aid Hanumān, 432–33; urges Maināka to rise from ocean, 433; Vībhīṣaṇa advises Rāma to solicit help of, 553. *See also* ocean

sages. *See* ascetic(s)
Sahya (mountains), 541; monkey army marches through, 542; Rambha and troops live in, 558
Śaibya, 200; gives body to hawk, 145; promises body to brahman, 145
Śailūṣa (king of *gandharvas*), 402; sons of, protect country of *gandharvas*, 845; Vajrajvāla daughter of, 747
Śakas: northern quarter location of country of, 404; produced from wish-fulfilling cow, 107
Śakra. *See* Indra
sāla tree(s): branch of, used as seat, 358; splitting of seven, by Rāma, 53, 363–64; —recalled, 366, 393; as weapon, 368
Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā: daughter of Sandhyā, 732; wife of Vidyutkeśa, 732
Śālmalī (river), 204
śālmalī or *śālmali* (tree), 326, 352, 546, 667. See also *kūṭaśālmalī* tree
Sāmaga (brahman who chants Sāmaveda), 383
Śambara (*asura*), 460, 629, 649, 759, 768; also called Timidhvaja, 141; Indra fights, 141. *See also* Timidhvaja
Śambasādana (*asura*), Kesarin kills, 487
Śambhu. *See* Śiva
Śambhu (king of *daityas*), 753, 759
Śambūka (*śūdra* ascetic), 16; austerities of, 18–19, 822; birth of, as *śūdra*, 822; execution/killing of, by Rāma, 18–20, 41, 822–23; Nārada (minister) informs Rāma about, 18, 821–22
Saṃhāras (weapon-spells), 75
Saṃkāśyā: capital city of Kuśadvaja, 121
Saṃkocana (mountain), 557–58
Saṃpāti (minister of Vibhīṣaṇa), 573, 734
Saṃpāti (vulture): Aṅgada distressed upon seeing, 416–17;—narrates story of Rāma to, 417–18; arrives to place where southern search party is fasting, 416; boon to, from Niśākara, 412; discovers death of brother Jaṭāyus, 417; elder brother of Jaṭāyus, 14, 24, 416–17; falls to Vindhya mountains, 422; fights Prajaṅgha, 581; grief of, 417; informs southern search party of Rāvaṇa's and Sītā's location, 14, 24, 418–20; Jaṭāyus and, make wager on Kailāsa, 421; monkeys do not trust, 417; prophecy of new wings for, by Niśākara, 422; provides assistance to Rāma, 24, 418; restoration of wings of, 423; saves southern search party from fasting to death by revealing Sītā's location, 14, 418–20; scolds Supārśva, 423; southern search party desires, as food, 416; story of, and Jaṭāyus, 418, 421–22; story of meeting with Niśākara narrated to Aṅgada by, 420–22; Supārśva son of, 419, 420; Suṣeṇa wants to send to ocean of milk, 591–92; tells Aṅgada of fight between Jaṭāyus and Rāvaṇa, 417–18; tells Aṅgada his own history, 420–23; water-libations of, for Jaṭāyus, 419–20; wings of, burned by sun, 418
Saṃrāṭ (Universal Emperor): as title, 35
Samudra. *See* Sāgara
Saṃvarta (brahman sage/seer): said to officiate at Marutta's sacrifice, 817; urges Marutta not to fight, 754
saṃvarta (weapon-spell): Bharata kills *gandharvas* with, 846; of Kāla, 80
Saṃyodhakaṇṭaka (*yakṣa*): Rāvaṇa attacks and defeats, 749
Sanatkumāra: tells Daśaratha story of Ṛśyaśṛṅga, 61, 63
sandalwood: *gośīrṣa*, 390; *hariśyāma*, 390; *padma*, 390
Sandhyā (goddess of twilight): Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā daughter of, 732
sandhyā rites, 458, 828; evening, 200, 212, 223, 270, 276, 544; morning, 137; propriety of women performing, 458; of Rāma, 182–83, 187, 270, 276, 544, 829; of Suyajña, 165; of Vālin, 781–82
Śaṅkara. *See* Śiva

Sanskrit: *anuṣṭubh* common meter of, 8; brahmanical usage of, 479; difficulties in translation of, 44–47; Hanumān speaks to Sītā in, 479; Ilava disguised as brahman speaks, 275; language of humans, 479; *Mahābhārata* composed in, 8; scribal transmission of manuscripts composed in, 7; *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* composed in, 3
Śāntā: marriage of, to Rśyaśṛṅga, 61, 63; travels to Āyodhyā, 64
Santāna(s) (heavenly world[s]): next to Brahmaloka, 854
Saptajanas (group of seven sages): ashram of, 364–66. *See also* seven seers
Śarabha (minister of Vibhīṣaṇa), 573
Śarabhaṅga (sage), 270; ashram of, 298, 716, 720; attains Brahmaloka, 268; austerities of, 267; becomes a youth again, 268; boon of, 268; directs Rāma to Sutīkṣṇa, 268; explains Indra's visit to Rāma, 268; Rāma meets, 52, 267–69; Virādha directs Rāma to, 267
Śarabja (monkey troop leader): declares prowess in jumping, 424; one of the five tigers among monkeys, 623; one of the five sons of Vaivasvata, 564
Saramā (*rākṣasa* woman): aids Sītā, 33, 568–70; birth of, 747; etymology of name of, 747; foretells Rāma's victory, 569; spies for Sītā, 569–70; wife of Vibhīṣaṇa, 747
Sāraṇa (minister of Rāvaṇa), 443, 749, 769, 776, 778; monkeys capture, 556; Rāma releases, 556; Rāvaṇa rebukes and humiliates, 562, Rāvaṇa sends, to spy on monkey army, 555–56; reports to Rāvaṇa on monkey troops, 556–57; spies for Rāvaṇa, 777; takes on the form of monkey, 556
sārasa crane(s) (*krauñca*[*s*]), 87, 182, 233, *passim*; Niṣāda kills male of mating pair of, 9, 54
Sarasvatī (goddess of speech), 31, 398, 709; Brahmā summons, to enter speech of Kumbhakarṇa, 31, 743–44; Vedavatī as incarnation of, 753
Sarasvatī (river), 398
Sarayū (river), 38, 58, 64, 66, 76, 91, 182, 198, 199, 213, 234, 283, 383, 398, 851; Asamañja drowns children in, 81, 170; etymology of, 77; Lakṣmaṇa closes off senses on banks of, 851; Rāma and followers enter its waters, 854–55; Rāma enters blazing power of Viṣṇu at, 854
Śārdūla (*rākṣasa* spy): advises Rāvaṇa, 563; declares impossibility of spying on Rāma's forces, 563; describes capture of spies and Rāma's forces, 563–64;—Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 564; names monkey leaders and their divine parents, 564; spared by Rāma, 563
sarga (chapter), 6, 10, 45, *passim*
Śarmiṣṭhā: as *daitya*, 805; daughter of Vṛṣaparvan, 805; mother of Puru, 805; favored wife of Yayāti, 805
Śatruṃjaya (elephant), 165–66, 724; Daśaratha's aged elephant, 236
Sārvabhauma (elephant): mount of Kubera, 405, 540, 635
Śatabali (monkey troop leader), 560, 587, 788; arrives in Kiṣkindhā, 397; fails to find Sītā, 409; leader of northern search party, 404, 407; number of troops of, 541, 580
Śatahradā: mother of Virādha, 266
Śatānanda, 112, 841; *purohita* of Janaka, 102–3, 120–21
Śatānanda: son of Gautama, 103; tells story of Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha, 103–17
Śatrughātin (son of Śatrughna son): consecration of, 852; established in Vaidiśa, 852
Śatrughna, 10, 58, 149, *passim*; accompanies Bharata to Rājagṛha, 130, 204; aids Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 724; attacks Mantharā, 23, 215; and Bharata inseparable, 123; birth of, 71; boon of, 817; character synopsis of, 23; childhood of, 72; as co-*avatāra*, 22; consecrates sons, Subāhu and Śatrughātin, 853; desires to follow Rāma to heaven, 852; devoted to Bharata, 72; etymology of name of, 815; fights and kills Lavaṇa, 17–18, 815–17; founds Madhurā (Mathurā), 18, 23, 818; founds Śūrasenā, 817; gains city of Madhupurī as residence, 817; greets Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā, 722–23; grief of, 214, 222–23, hears of births of Lava and Kuśa, 813; hears recitation of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 18, 58, 818–19; laments Rāma and mourns Daśaratha, 213–14; makes preparations for consecration of Rāma, 721–25; marries Śrutakīrti 123, 125; messengers report events in

Ayodhyā to, 852; prepares highway for Rāma's return, 721; *purohita* of, Kāñcana, 852; —unnamed, 818; questions Cyavana about Lavaṇa, 814; Rāma asks Bhadra about, 791;—consecrates, in Madhurā, 809–10;—dismisses, 18, 819–20; —dispatches to kill Lavaṇa, 17–18, 809–10;—gives, arrow of Viṣṇu, 810; —informs, of intention to abandon Sītā, 792–94;—sends back to Madhurā, 18, 819–20; requests Rāma to deal with Lavaṇa, 809; resides in Madhupurī (Suraseṇā), 817–18; returns to Ayodhyā, 18, 818–19, 852;—to Ayodhyā with Bharata, 206; role of, in epic of, 23; sets forth to kill Lavaṇa, 811; spends night in Vālmīki's ashram, 18, 812, 818; Śrutakīrti wife of, 125; Sumitrā mother of, 71; twin brother of Lakṣmaṇa, 18, 71; youngest brother of Rāma, 18, 23; Yudhājit takes, to his home, 130
Satyavatī: sister of Viśvāmitra, 86; transformed into Kauśikī River, 86; wife of Ṛcīka, 86. *See also* Kauśikī
Saudāsa. *See* Mitrasaha Saudāsa
Saumanasa (mountain peak): made of gold, 400
Saumanasa (one of the elephants who support the earth), 93
Saumanasa (spell): Viśvāmitra intones and gives Rāma, 81
Saumitri. *See* Lakṣmaṇa
Savitra: eighth among Vasus, 769; fights and kills Sumālin, 769
Sāvitrī: as example of wifely obedience, 163, 260
Sāvitrī *mantra*, 853
sayings, popular. *See* proverbs
seer(s): 29, 32, 52, *passim*; of Citrakūṭa inform Rāma of the presence of *rākṣasas*, 258–59; collectively known as *ṛṣis* or *kavis*, 39; omniscient vision of, 4, 39; tell Bharata to agree to Rāma's request, 254. *See also* ascetic(s); Saptajanas; seven seers
self-immolation: as a means of suicide, 454. *See also* ordeal by fire; Sītā: fire ordeal
semen: eaten and released by Agni, 88; porridge as, 70; retention of, by Cūlin, 85; of Śiva, 88; Vasiṣṭha enters, of Mitra and Varuṇa, 803
serpent(s), 29, 70, 74, *passim*; arrows of Indrajit become, 592 (*see also* serpent-weapons); as battle standard of Prahasta, 600; Bhogavatī city of, 299, 401, 437, 439; chariot of Rāvaṇa encircled by, 770; drank nectar, 738; Garuḍa (Tārkṣya) defeats, 756 (*see also* Garudā); Kadrū mother of, 281; live in Rasātala, 760; Rāvaṇa abducts daughters of, 762–63; —conquers, 545, 760;—wishes to conquer, 757; *rākṣasas* use as mounts, 736, 765, 771; Surasā mother of serpents, 280, 434, 519; throne of Dharaṇi emerges from earth on heads of, 843. Vāsuki, lord of, 299, 401, 760; *See also* Takṣaka; Vāsuki
serpent-chariot: of Sumālin, 769
serpents, five-headed. *See* five-headed serpents
serpent-weapons: of Indrajit Rāvaṇi, 24, 32, 584, 592; of Rāvaṇa, 689–90
seven seas, 348–49, 583, 697
seven seers (sages), 67, 112, 158, 349, 365, 765, 728. *See also* ascetic(s); Saptajanas
sexual predator: Rāvaṇa as, 5
shadow(s): Aṅgārakā captures, 401; *asuras* capture, 399; of Hanumān, 431, 432; Siṃhikā captures, 436, 520
shape-shifting (taking form at will): of Akṣa, 504; of Añjanā, 425–26; of arrows, 583, 592, 690; of *asuras*, 275–76; of divine weapons, 80; of Dundubhi, 362, 408; of Ganges, 89, 95; of Garuḍa, 468; of gods, 10, 754; of Hanumān, 429, 435–36, 438–39, 498, 500, 561, 598, 718; of Himālaya, 362; of Indra, 91, 100–101, 272, 700; of Indrajit, 584 ; of Jaṭāyus and Saṃpāti, 421; of Kabandha, 344; of Kubera's forest, 227–28; of Kumbhakarṇa, 620–21; of Maināka, 433; of Mārīca, 13, 32, 304, 309–19, 306, 313–16, 325, 330–31, 333; of monkeys, 38, 70–71, 397, 538, 556, 558, 560, 574–75, 579, 580, 685, 722, 724; of *rākṣasas*, 273, 337, 373, 465, 483, 498–99, 581, 584, 651, 676, 704, 812–13;

of Rāma's bow and arrows, 690, 853; of Rāvaṇa, 13, 319, 459, 473, 479, 483, 578, 696, 700; of Saṃpāti, 421; of serpents, 468, 584, 592; of Siṃhikā, 436; of Sugrīva, 346; of Śuka and Sāraṇa, 556; of sun, 490, 477; of Surasā, 434–35, 520; of Tāṭakā, 78; of Tumburu, 266–67; of Vātāpi, 275, 865; of vedas, 853; of ministers of Vibhīṣaṇa as birds, 573; of Viṣṇu, 10, 40, 69, 82, 91–94, 801, 832, 849, 866; of Yama, 373, 379, 571, 848; of Yama's rod and war hammer, 759–60
shawl of Sītā: dropped, 357; found by monkeys, 357; Sugrīva shows Rāma, 357
sibling rivalry: among monkeys, 24; between Rāvaṇa and Kubera, 29, 741; between the sons of Diti and Aditi, 742, 744. *See also* fraternal conflict; Sugrīva: enmity of, with Vālin
Siddhārtha (minister of Daśaratha), 60, 170, 204
Siddhārtha Gautama, 36
signet ring: Hanumān gives, of Rāma to Sītā, 487, 522;—gives, of Rāma to Sītā recalled, 522; Rāma gives, to Hanumān, 14, 27, 56, 407, 522
siṃha birds: live on slope of Himagiri mountain, 402
Siṃhikā: catches Hanumān's shadow, 436; Hanumān encounters and kills, 436; Rāhu son of, 784; shape-shifting of, 436
simile, extended (*mālopamā*): of Ahalyā, 102; of arms of Rāvaṇa arms, 449; of arrows of Rāma, 628, 698;—of arrows of Rāvaṇa, 605;—of arrows of Viṣṇu, 737; of *aśoka* grove of Rāvaṇa, 456–58; of Ayodhyā, 256; of Bharata's chariot, 256–57; of Daśaratha's corpse, 202; of the earth, 421; of Hanumān, 431, 504; of Kumbhakarṇa, 611, 620–21; of Laṅkā, 646; of moon, 439, 441; of ocean, 543; of palace of Rāvaṇa, 444–45; of *rākṣasas*, 738; of Rambhā, 766; of Rāvaṇa, 318, 448–49, 451, 509, 469, 609; 605; of Sītā, 442, 459, 462–65; of Sītā's face, 244, 324; of a stream, 457; of trees, 430–431; of women of Rāvaṇa's inner apartments, 447–48, 449–50
simulacrum, Indrajit Rāvaṇi creates, of Sītā, 655–56; of Rāma's head and bow produced by Vidyujjihva, 564–68; —vanishes at Rāvaṇa's departure, 567
Śiśira (weapon-spell): of Soma, 80
Śiśira (mountain), 399
Sītā, 10, 12, 13, *passim*; abandonment of, by Rāma, 6, 17–19, 794–978; abduction of, by Rāvaṇa, 12–15, 24, 30, 32, 52, 56, 320–27;—by Rāvaṇa Brahmā witnesses, 324;—by Rāvaṇa foreshadowed, 30;— by Rāvaṇa creatures seem to mourn, 325;—by Rāvaṇa crow foretells, 351; —by Rāvaṇa Jaṭāyus attempts to stop, 13, 321–23;—by Rāvaṇa as pivotal event of poem, 12;—by Rāvaṇa recalled, 355–57; 413, 434, 482, 519–20, 787; —by Rāvaṇa rumors arise about, 793; —by Rāvaṇa Supārśva witnesses, 420; —by Virādha, 12, 32, 265–67;—by Virādha recalled, 460, 677;—Rāvaṇa plots, 303–4; accuses Lakṣmaṇa of treachery, 13, 313–14; Agastya praises, 278–79; age of, at exile, 317; Agni brings, out of the fire unsinged, 710;—instructs Rāma to take back, 710;—testifies to fidelity of, 710; Analā relates information to, 489; Anasūyā gives gifts to, 261; asceticism of, 464, 469, 513; ashamed of being seen in public, 706; asks Lakṣmaṇa to rescue Rāma, 313; Rāma to capture golden deer, 13, 310–11;—Saramā to spy on Rāvaṇa, 569; asserts fidelity to Rāma, 708; auspicious omens of, 478, 481; begs Hanumān to stay in Laṅkā, 495;—Rāma for golden deer, 310–11; birth of, from a furrow, 21, 118, 261, 461, 753–54, 843; Bhadra tells Rāma rumors about, 791–92; blames self for misfortunes, 475, 493;—for suffering, 704; bodily signs of, 587–88; born for the destruction of *rākṣasas*, 678; braid of, 459, 465, 473, 478, 518, 524, 532, 569; bride price of, 118, 120, 123; captivity of, 327–30; 459–99, 516, 566–67, 587–89;—recalled, 531–32. . character synopsis of, 12, 21–22; compassion of, 34, 272, 704; contemplates suicide, 473–74, 477–78; conversation of, with Hanumān, 480–97; cries out for help, 320–21; crow foretells abduction of, 351; daughter of earth goddess, 11, 118, 843; declines Hanumān's offer to carry back to Rāma, 490–92; defies *rākṣasa* women, 471–74; denies knowing Hanumān, 498–99; describes own auspicious marks, 588–89; description of, 260, 272, 459–65, 588–89; desires to visit asectics' ashrams, 791, 793–94; devotion of, to Rāma, 442, 460, 462–63, 464, 465, 467, 477, 491, 524;

disapproves of going to Daṇḍaka forest, 272;—of killing *rākṣasas*, 272, 704; Dharaṇī/Mādhavī descends to Rasātala with, 19, 843; discovery of, saves Rāma from unrighteousness, 537; dropped ornaments of, monkeys find, 485; drops ornaments, 357;—Jaṭāyus sees, 418;—shawl, 326–27, 357; dwells in Pañcavaṭī with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 12, 281–83; eats meat, 791; elements grieve for, 325; enters Daṇḍaka forest with Rāma, 12, 52, 56, 264;—Rasātala, 19, 843;—the fire, 708; etymology of name of, 118; exhorts Hanumān, 494–95;—Lakṣmaṇa to find Rāma, 313–14; fasting of, 422, 459, 465, 483, 518, 521, 544; fears Hanumān, 481–83;—Rāma and army will be unable to cross the ocean, 495;—Rāma will make love to other women, 478;—Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa have been killed, 477; fears of, 474–75, 477–78; fire does not burn, 516, 710; fire ordeal (*agniparīkṣā*) of, 15, 17, 708, 710–11, 793; foretells destruction of Laṅkā, 474;—destruction of Rāvaṇa, 330, 474; foster daughter of Janaka, 11, 21, 118, 708; as foundling, 11, 21, 118, 843; gives birth to Lava and Kuśa, 17, 813; gives Hanumān hair ornament, 56, 494;—message for Rāma, 496–97;—pearl necklace, 726; golden image of, 18, 838; grief of, 16, 324, 326, 382, 329, 420, 458–52, 462–65, 471–75, 477–79, 481–83, 486–87, 489–92, 495–97, 511, 513, 523–24, 544, 566, 587–89, 619, 705, 797; grief of Rāma at separation from, 334–336, 339, 349, 351–52, 355, 357–58, 381, 385–87, 393, 485–86, 488–89, 530, 537–38, 543–44;—of Rāma over abandonment of, 794, 799–800;—of Rāma over false report of death of, 658, 661;—of Rāma over return of, to mother, 843–44; hair ornament of, 56, 494, 497, 532, 534; Hanumān consoles, 14, 459–97, 516, 482–83, 495;—describes Rāma to, 484–85;—devotee of, 27;—discovers, 14, 53, 56, 459–60, 462;—encounters, 480–97, 516–17;—exhorts, 494–95; —fears he has burned, 515;—fears, is dead, 452, 453–54;—fears, might take her own life, 479;—gives signet ring of Rāma to, 14, 27, 487;—gives signet ring of Rāma to recalled, 522;—mistakes Mandodarī for, 450;—offers to carry, back, 14, 491;—ponders danger of revealing himself to, 479–80;—reassures, 487–90, 495–96;—searches for, in Laṅkā, 14, 439–59;—searches for, in Laṅkā, recalled, 531–32, 782;—speaks to, in Sanskrit, 479;—takes no other wife than, 845; —tells Rāma, is found, 531–32; —tells Rāma's story to, 480;—tells Rāvaṇa to return, 511–12;— tells Rāvaṇa Sītā got lost in forest, 510;—terrorizes *rākṣasa* wardresses of, 498–99; inauspicious omens presage abduction, 314, 324, 330–31, 333;—presage abandonment, 794; as ideal wife (*pativratā*), 5, 22, 478; implores Rāma to take her to the Daṇḍaka forest, 161–63; Indra gives food to, 422; in inner apartments of Rāvaṇa, 327, 328, 619, 452, 532, 553, 710; innocence of, 19, 513–14, 710–11, 842–43;—as object of scandal among people, 792–93;—Rāma orders, publicly proven, 710; instructs Lakṣmaṇa to build her a pyre, 708; Janaka finds, while ploughing (*see* Sītā: birth of, from a furrow *this entry*); Jaṭāyus attempts to save, 13, 24, 52, 322–23; —tells Rāma of abduction of, 340–41; —vows to watch over, 281; joy of, at learning of Rāma's victory, 703–4; as Kālarātrī, 511, 566; Lakṣmaṇa builds a pyre for fire ordeal of Sītā, 708;— builds hut for Rāma and, in Pañcavaṭī, 282;—consoles Rāma over, 335, 338–40, 381–82, 386, 800;—guards, 312;—leaves, unprotected, 13, 314, 331;—refuses to gaze upon, 21;—seeks recourse in cave with, 291;—urges Rāma to search for, 338–39; laments, 473–75, 477–78;—for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 587–88;—over simulacra of Rāma's head and bow, 566–67; leaves Āyodhyā with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 11, 172–74; love of Rāma for, 129; Mārīca as golden deer entices, 13, 310–11; marriage of, to Rāma, 11, 123–25;—recalled, 262; meets with Anasūyā, 56, 259–63; monkeys find jewelry of, 357;—plan to rescue, 525–26; —report on condition of, 531–32;—search for, 408–23;—witness abduction of, 326–27; oath of purity of (*see* Sītā: truth-act of *this entry*); pearl necklace of, 325; places straw between herself and Rāvaṇa, 459, 467; power of austerities of, 469; praises Hanumān, 487; pregnancy of, 17, 791, 796; prehistory of (*see* Vedavatī); prepares to hang herself with her braid, 478; prophecy of abduction of, by Niśākara, 422; protected by her own virtuous conduct, 516; questions Hanumān about Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 487–89; *rākṣasa* women aid, 28, 33, 475, 568–70, 589;—cajole and threaten, 14, 33, 330, 470–72, 477;—guard, 327, 328;—take, to battlefield in Puṣpaka, 587;—tell, of Hanumān's punishment, 513; Rāma abandons (*see* Sītā: abandonment of,

by Rāma *this entry*);—agrees to take, to forest, 164;—asks Jaṭāyus to protect, 312; —asks Lakṣmaṇa to protect Sītā, 312; —exhorts Sugrīva to search for, 358;—gives, pearl necklace, 726; —grieves for Sītā (*see* Sītā: grief of Rāma at separation from *this entry*);—has Lakṣmaṇa abandon, 794–97;—describes hardships of forest to, 161–62;—hears rumors about, 792; —informs Sītā of exile, 159–60;—laments for, 13, 333–35, 385, 543–44;—marries (*see* Sītā: marriage of, to Rāma *this entry*);—orders to Vibhīṣaṇa to bring, 705;—promises to capture golden deer for, 13, 311–12; —rage of, at loss of; —336–38, 843–44;—recognizes sons of, 10, 19, 841;—rebukes Lakṣmaṇa for leaving, 331–33;—repudiates and rejects, as unfaithful, 15, 706–7;—reunion of, with, 705–11; saves Sītā from crow, 492–93 ;—saves Sītā from crow recalled, 533–34;—sends Lakṣmaṇa and, into hiding, 291;—romantic interlude of, with, in *aśoka grove*, 790–91;—summons to assembly, 841–43;—tells, of need to use violence, 273;—tests true feelings of, 164; vows to annihilate abductor of Sītā, 511; Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa rescue, from Virādha, 267; *Rāmāyaṇa* as Great Tale of, 3, 57; Rāvaṇa abducts (*see* Sītā: abduction of, by Rāvaṇa *this entry*);—approaches in guise of ascetic, 13, 314–17;—falls at feet of, 521;—gives ultimatum to, 468, 521; —hears history of, 316–17;—offers, sovereignty over Laṅkā, 328;—praises beauty of, 315–16;—refuses to give back, 563, 570, 572;—reveals identity to, 317; —reveals true form to, 319–20;—shows Laṅkā to, 328;—takes, to Laṅkā, 327; —terrifies, by violent approach, 674; —threatens, 330, 468–69;—visits, in *aśoka* grove, 463–70;—woos, 320; 328–29, 465–66; Rāvaṇa's wives encourage, 468; rebukes *rākṣasa* women, 471–74;—Rāma, 163, 707–8;—Rāvaṇa, 467–68;—Rāvaṇa for abduction, 325–26; recounts crow episode, 492–93;—her history to Hanumān, 481–82; reduced to tears by Rāma's cruel words, 707; refuses Hanumān's offer of rescue, 14, 490–92;—Hanumān's request to kill *rākṣasa* women, 704; —Rāvaṇa's advances, 467;—to eat during captivity, 422;—to touch any male other than Rāma, 491; regrets refusing Hanumān's offer to rescue, 674; rejects Rāma's accusations, 707–8;—Rāvaṇa's advances, 317–18, 319; reviles and warns Rāvaṇa, 317–19, 325–26, 329–30, 467–69; as role model, 22, 42; rumors about, 17, 792, 795, 800;—Rāma hears, 792;—Rāma tells brothers of, 792; Sampāti informs southern search party of location of, 14, 24, 418–20; Saramā aids, 33, 568–70; sees Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa wounded, 587; silk shawl of, 326, 357; southern search party, with Hanumān, will find, 409; sons of Lava and Kuśa, 10, 19, 813; Sugrīva dispatches monkeys to search for, 13, 402–7;—instructs Hanumān to find, 406; Śūrpaṇakhā attacks, 12, 285; —describes, to Rāvaṇa, 301; Sutīkṣṇa directs, to visit ashrams of Agastya, 276–79; takes Rāma's signet ring from Hanumān, 14, 487;—Rāma's signet ring from Hanumān, recalled, 522; tells Anasūyā about birth and marriage, 262; Hanumān crow episode, 492–93; —Hanumān of Rāma's exile and her abduction, 481–82;—story of sword-wielding ascetic, 272; thinks Hanumān is an illusion, 481–82;—is Rāvaṇa, 482; tours Citrakūṭa with Rāma, 232–34; Trijaṭā reassures, 589;—tells dream to, 475–77; from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā in Puṣpaka with Rāma, 715–16; truth-act of, 19, 513–14, 843;—Hanumān, unburnt through, 513–14; urges compassion for the wicked as well as the good, 704; —Rāma to abjure violence, 272; *Uttarakāṇḍa* refers to ordeal by fire of, 793; Vālmīki shelters and consoles, 17, 797–98; Vedavatī reincarnates as, 21–22, 753–54; Vibhīṣaṇa advises Rāvaṇa to return, 547–48;—enters inner apartments of Rāvaṇa to find, 705;—brings, to Rāma, 705–6;—conveys Rāma's instruction to, 705;—declares the killing of, to be illusion, 660;—has Sītā mount palanquin, 705;—orders passage of, cleared of moneys, apes and *rākṣasas*, 705–6; —orders, come in full view of the public, 706; visits Agastya, 276–79;—Agastya's brother, 275–76; —Śarabhaṅga, 268;—Sutīkṣṇa's ashram, 269–71, 274–75; wants Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to discard weapons, 272; warns Rāma of perils of violence, 271–72; —Rāvaṇa of Rāma's vengeance, 468; wears barkcloth garments, 170–71; welcomes Rāvaṇa in guise of an ascetic, 316; wishes Rāma would renounce kingship for ascetic life, 272;—to accompany Rāma into exile, 11, 161–64; —to see Rāma, while unbathed, 705; wives of Daśaratha welcome, 128; wonders why Rāma has not rescued her, 474–75; words of Rāma wound, 707

Śiva (Bhava, Hara, Mahādeva, Maheśvara, Paśupati, Rudra, Śambhu, Sthāṇu), 11, 16, 29, 96, 126, 732, 733, 736, 833–34, 837, *passim*; asceticism of, 89; asks gods who will bear his semen, 88; austerities of, 89; bow of, 117–19, 127;—Rāma breaks, 11,13, 119;—unstrung by Viṣṇu, 127; burns Kāma, 76–77; checks fall of Ganges, 95; crushes Rāvaṇa's arms under mountain, 752; denies god's request to kill sons of Sukeśa, 735; "Destroyer" as part of Trimūrti, 35; fights Viṣṇu, 127; friendship of, with Kubera, 748;—with Rāvaṇa, 30, 752; gender transformation of, 833; gives bow to Devarāta, 127;—Daśagrīva the name "Rāvaṇa," 752; gods take refuge with, 735; grants boon of manhood to Ila, 837;—to Hanumān, 786;—Ila any boon but manhood, 834;—boons to Indrajit, 764;—knowledge of weapon-spells to Viśvāmitra, 107;—lance as boon to Madhu, 808, 811;—boons to Sukeśa, 732–33; Kubera pleases, 748; lance of Lavaṇa returns to, 817; lord of Umā, 736; marries Pārvatī, 88; partial to Sukeśa, 735–36; pleased with *aśvamedha* of Ila, 837; presents heavenly spirit of Daśaratha to Rāma, 711; presses down Śaravana with big toe, 752; promises the gods woman would bring about his destruction, 678; Rāma breaks bow of, 11, 13, 119;—compared to, 292, 298, 455, 647, *passim*; Rāvaṇa lifts up mountain, sitting on, 752; worships *liṅga* of, 776; releases Ganges into Lake Bindu, 95; semen of, generates Kārttikeya, 88; story of marriage of, and Pārvatī, 87–88; story of, and Pārvatī and Ila/Ilā, 833–34; tells gods to seek refuge with Vīṣṇu, 735–36; —Rāma to perform *aśvamedha*, 711; thanks Rāma for ridding world of Rāvaṇa, 711; weapon-spells of, 626, 684, 764, 758

size of Hanumān. *See* Hanumān: size of, changeable

Skanda (Mahāsena), 158, 740, 833; Agni as father of, 560; birth of, 88–90; etymology of name of, 90; Śravaṇa birthplace of, 751; wielder of the javelin, 740

sky: fifth path in, that of vultures, 419; first path in, that of *kuliṅgas*, 419; fourth path in, that of falcons, 419; highest path in, that of sons of Vinatā, 419; second path in, that of crows, 419; sixth path in, that of *haṃsas*, 419; third path in, that of *krauñcas*, kites, and ospreys, 419

sleep: of Kumbhakarṇa, 31, 610, 744, 747

śloka, 55; etymology of word, 55; type of meter, 8, 55; type of verse, 8, 55, 391; word for poetry, 55

social classes (*varṇas*): in Ayran society, 40–41

social status: of Guha, 41; of Śabarī, 41

Solar Dynasty (Sūryavaṃśa), 25, 36. *See also* genealogy: of Ikṣvākus

Soma (moon god), 36, 158, 251, 276, 307, 709, 830, 839; ashram of, 404; Budha son of, 835–36; Dadhimukha son of, 564; Purūravas grandson of, 836; Śiśira weapon-spell of, 80

Somadā (*gandharva* woman): mother of Brahmadatta, 86–87

Somagiri (mountain in northern ocean), 405

Somavaṃśa (Lunar Dynasty), 36

son(s): of Aditi, 97–98, 280, 744 (*see also* Aditi; *āditya*(*s*)); of brahman, death of, 18, 820;—restored to life, 18, 823; of Diti, 97–98, 280, 744, 760, 833 (see also *daitya*(*s*); Diti); lack of, of Daśaratha, 10, 81; of Rāma (*see* Kuśa; Lava); of Sagara, 90–96; of Sītā (*see* Kuśa; Lava); of Vinatā, that of, highest path in sky, 419

Śoṇā (river). *See* Māgadhī

southern quarter: Aṅgada, leader of search party of, 27, 400, 407; description of, 400–402; southen search party searches, 409–411; Sugrīva dispatches southern search party to, 400–402, 407

southern search party: adventures of, 13–14; —Hanumān narrates to 413; Aṅgada exhorts, 410;—leader of, 27. 400, 407; decide to fast to death, 14, 414, 417–18; —to return to cave, 414; dejection of, 410–11, 416; despondency of, 417, 423, 425; encounter of, with Svayaṃprabhā, 411–14; enters cave, 411; exhaustion of, 410–11, 413; fails find Sītā, 409; kills *asura*, 409–10; monkeys of, 411; reaches southern shore of ocean, 423; Saṃpāti desires, as food, 416;—informs, of location of Rāvaṇa and Sītā, 14, 24, 418–20; search southern quarter, 409–11; seeks refuge with

Svayaṃprabhā, 413; Sugrīva dispatches, to southern quarter, 400–402, 407; Svayaṃprabhā rescues, from cave, 413
spies of Rāvāṇa. *See* Śārdūla; Sāraṇa; Śuka
śrāddha rites, 213, 250, 275, 276
Śrāvatī: Rāma founds, for Lava, 852
Śrī (goddess of royal fortune or beauty), 4, 69, 216, 376–77, 591, 733, 734, 740, 741, 797; Danu son of, 355; Sītā compared to, 129, 177, 190, 261, 315, 333, 460, 466, 544, 570, 572, 705
Śrīvatsa mark: Rāma as Viṣṇu bears, 709
Śṛṅgaverapura: Guha lord of, 182, 256
Śrutakīrti: marries Śatrughna, 123–25
śruti, "what was heard," 39
statecraft (*nītiśāstra*): discourses on: 104, 203, 239–241,488, 510–12, 547–546, 571–72, 677; of Kumbhakarṇa to Rāvaṇa, 31, 615–16, 619;—of Rāma to Vālin, 370–72; of Vālin to Rāma, 369–70
Sthāṇu. *See* Śiva
Sthūlākṣa (*rākṣasa* general): Rāma fights and kills, 291–93
Sthūlasiras (ascetic): curses Kabandha, 344
stratagems of kings, 353
straw: Brahmā's power in, 493; Sītā places, between herself and Rāvaṇa, 467
structure of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. See *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*: structure of
Subāhu (monkey), 580
Subāhu (*rākṣasa*): obstructs Viśvāmitra's sacrifice 82–83; Rāma kills, 10, 33, 83; Rāvaṇa commands to obstruct sacrifices, 74; Viśvāmitra complains, obstructing sacrifice, 73
Subāhu (son of Śatrughna): Śatrughna consecrates, in Madhurā, 852
Śubhra (*gandharva* lord), 402
Sudāmana (counselor): of Janaka, 121
Sudāmana (weapon-spell): of Tvāṣṭṛ, 80
Sudarśana (elephant): born in Airāvata's lineage, 530; Mahodara mounts, 630
Sudhanvan: Janaka kills, 123
Śūdra (region): monkeys search, 402
śūdra(s) (social class), 18, 19, 40, 41, 54, 60, 199, 402, 477, 822–24.; born from the feet of Manu, 280; forbidden to practice austerities in *tretā yuga*, 822; in list of four social classes, 65, 219, 240, 280, 821, 842; role of, in the *yugas*, 821; Śambūka as (*see* Śambūka)
Sugrīva: addicted to sensual pleasures of, 384; adoptive son of Ṛkṣarajas, 350, 563, 624, 786; advice of Hanumān to, 384–85, 389–90; alarmed at Lakṣmaṇa's anger, 390; alliance of, with Rāma, 13, 25, 30, 53, 56, 356–58, 364, 486, 716; —sanctified by fire, 356–58 (*see also* Sugrīva: friendship with Rāma); created by gods on Rāma's behalf, 787; Aṅgada announces Lakṣmaṇa's arrival to, 389; —fears imprisonment by, 414, 415–16; Aṅgada and, place Vālin on bier, 378; apologizes to Lakṣmaṇa, 393; assaults Kumbhakarṇa with a mountain, 624; assembles monkeys, 385; assures Vibhīṣaṇa he will be *rākṣasas*' king, 591; blocks Vālin in cave, 360–61;—recalled, 408; challenges Kumbhakarṇa, 624;—Rāma to split *sāla* trees, 53, 363–64;—Rāma to split *sāla* trees, recalled, 366;—Vālin to battle, 364–66; character analysis of, 25; claims army can leap over the ocean, 537; comforts Rāma, 359, 530–31; commander of monkey army, 398, 540–41, *passim*; conciliates Lakṣmaṇa, 393; consecrates Aṅgada crown prince, 380–81; consecration of, in kingship, 360, 379–80; counselors set, in Vālin's place, 786; delays fulfillment of promise, 13; departs from Kiṣkindhā with Lakṣmaṇa 395; derelict in duty, 387–88; describes Vālin, 362; description of abode of, 390–91; dethroned by his brother, Vālin, 485; dispatches monkey army in all four directions, 13, 398–402, 404–7; dwells at Pampā and Mount Ṛśyamūka, 346–47, 349–50; enmity of, with Vālin, 13, 26, 359–63, 408, 787; enters abode of Lakṣmaṇa, 391; enumerates

monkeys to Rāma, 396; exhorts Rāma to abandon grief, 537; fears Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 353, 359, 716;—Vālin, 346, 349, 353, 359; fights and kills Kumbha, 649–50; —Praghasa (*rākṣasa*), 581; fights Kumbha, 649–50;—Mahodara, 681–82;—Rāvaṇa, 604–5;—Vālin 53, 56, 364, 368; —Virūpākṣa, 680–81; friendship of, with Rāma, 354, 356, 358, 364, 371, 549–50, 590, 725 (*see also* Sugrīva: alliance of, with Rāma); friendship of, with Hanumān, 787; *gajapuṣpī* garland of, as identifying sign, 25, 364, 366; —Lakṣmaṇa gives, 364–65; golden necklace of, 561; grief of, 359–61, 379, 408; Hanumān counselor of, 27; —emissary of, 510;—to assist, against Vālin, 783, 787;—introduces Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to, 356; harsh nature of, 414; holds fly whisk for Rāma's consecration, 724–25; hostility of Vālin with, 787; infers success of southern search party, 529; inflicts punishment, 410, 414, 416, 425, 452, 528; instructs monkeys to search the directions, 13, 398–406; —Śatabali to search foothills of Kailāsa, 405; Kabandha tells Rāma about, 345–46; Kaikeyī embraces, 722; kills Kumbha, 650;—Mahodara, 682;—Virūpākṣa, 680–81; Kumbhakarṇa carries off, 624; Lakṣmaṇa directed by Rāma to find, 350; reviles, 391–92;—threatens, 392; Lakṣmaṇa's anger toward, 387–89, 390, 392; lives on Ṛśyamūka, 342, 346, 347, 349, 350, 352, 358, 485; lord of apes, 384, 486; lord of monkeys, 379, 393, 398, 485, *passim*; makes pact with Rāma to kill Vālin, 486; meeting of, with Lakṣmaṇa, 391;—with Rāma, 13, 356;—with Rāma on Mount Prasravaṇa [Mālyavān], 395–96; misfortune of, 357, 359; mistreatment of, by Vālin, 354; mounts elephant in procession for Rāma's consecration, 724; enmity of, with Vālin, 13, 26, 355–63, 408; offers funerary libations for Vālin of, 360; orders Hanumān to meet Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 353–54;—Hanumān to summon monkeys, 394;—monkeys to assemble, 393;—monkeys to storm Lañkā with torches, 645;—Nīla to assemble monkey army, 385; pardons monkeys for devastation of Madhuvana, 529; portrayed as cruel, impetuous, cowardly, and as a libertine, 25; praises Hanumān, 529; —Kumbha, offers him respite, 649; promises Rāma to search for and recover Sītā, 13, 357; qualities of, 25; Rāma exhorts, to aid in search for Sītā, 358; Rāma exhorts to search for Sītā, 358; gives, gold diadem, 726;—gives, tribute given to him by kings, 788;—invites to *aśvamedha*, 838;—places his palace at disposal of, 735;—praises, 789;—sends back to Kiṣkindhā, 788–89; —sends Lakṣmaṇa to exhort, 387; —unable to find and recover Sītā without, help of, 25; Rāma's anger at, 386–87; reassures Rāma of success in mission, 537–38;—that Sītā has been found, 531; receives Vibhīṣaṇa, 575; reconciles with Lakṣmaṇa, 393; recovers wife Rumā, 381; requests help from Rāma, 355, 396; sees destruction of Madhuvana, 528–29; sends Hanumān to meet Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 353–54;—monkeys to search for Sītā, 13;—monkeys to the four oceans for Rāma's consecration, 725; slaughters principal *rākṣasas*, 680; smashed to ground, escapes, 626; son of Ṛkṣarajas, 346, 350; son of Sūrya, 71, 346, 355; succeeds Ṛkṣarajas as king, 786; summoned to *aśvamedha*, 838; Sūrya natural father of, 27, 71, 355; Tārā coveted by, 384; Tārā defends, 392–93;—and, offer funeral libations for, 379; Vālin abducts wife of, 361;—exiles, 11, 25, 345–46, 361;—advises Añgada to be submissive to, 376;—elder brother of, and rightful heir, 26, 353, 360;—gives, golden garland, 376;—gives, sovereignty of monkeys, 376;—more powerful than 26;—routs, 364;—takes wife of, 359; Vālin's anger at, 360–61; waits on brahmans assembled for *aśvamedha*, 838; wife of, 371, 374, 381, 391, 392, 408, 416, 454; wounds Kumbhakarṇa with fangs and claws, 625

suicide: by fasting, 454; by hanging, 454; by poison, 454; by self-immolation, 454; by weapons, 454; Hanumān contemplates, 455; Rāma threatens, 150; Sītā contemplates, 473–74, 477–78;—threatens, 163–64, 314;—threatens hanging as a means of, 314, 478

Śuka (minister of Rāvaṇa), 443, 749, 776–78; claims Rāvaṇa is victorious, 754; monkeys capture, 556; Rāma releases, 556; Rāvaṇa deploys to spy, 555–56;—rebukes and humiliates, 562; reports to Rāvaṇa, 556–57; spies for Rāvaṇa, 777; takes on the form of monkey, 556

Sukeśa: birth of, 732; Devavatī wife of, 733; Mālin, Mālyavān, Sumālin sons of, 733; Śiva grants boons to, 733; sons of, attack the world of the gods, 736–37;—dwell in Lañkā with their followers,

734;—gods ask Viṣṇu to kill, 735;—harry gods and *asuras*, 733–35;—much more powerful than Rāvaṇa, 740;—none but Nārāyaṇa capable of killing, 740;—practice fearsome austerities, 733;—receive boons from Brahmā, 733;—request Viśvakarman to build mansion for, 733–74 (*see also* Mālin; Mālyavān; Sumālin)
Suketu (son of Nandivardhana): king of the Ikṣvāku lineage, 122
Suketu (*yakṣa*): father of Tāṭakā, 78
Śūkra (preceptor of the demons). *See* Uśanas Kāvya
Sumāgadhī (river). *See* Māgadhī
Sumālin: austerities of, 733; battles gods, 739–40; boons of, 733, 735–36; Devavatī mother of, 733; Dhūmrākṣa son of, 734; emerges from Rasātala, 744,; flees to Lañkā, 739–40; Kaikasī daughter of, 734; Kumbhīnasī (1) daughter of, 734; leaves Rasātala, 740; Savitra fights and kill, 769; sends Kaikasī to ask Viśravas to marry her, 741; serpent-chariot of, 769; urges Rāvaṇa to seize Lañkā from Kubera, 744. *See also* Mālin; Mālyavān; Sukeśa: sons of, attack the world of the gods
Sumantra (minister and charioteer of Daśaratha), 52, 56, 60–62, 64, 66, 147, 170–71, *passim*; brings Bharata back from forest, 253; consoles Kausalyā, 195;—Śatrughna, 214; Daśaratha orders, to bring Rāma, 133–34, 147; delivers Rāma's message to Daśaratha, 192–94; —Bharata to find Rāma, 218, 219, 232; —Rāma into exile, 173–75;—Sītā to forest, 794–95; fetches Rāma to Daśaratha, 133–34, 147–48, 168; grief of, 185, 191–92, 195; invites participants to Daśaratha's sacrifice, 65; joins brothers in forest, 242; Kaikeyī orders, to bring Rāma, 146; Lakṣmaṇa extols Rāma's virtues to, 179; Rāma dismisses, 184–87
Sumati (1), 99–100; mother of Sagara's 60,000 sons, 91; wife of Sagara, 90
Sumati (2): son of Kākutstha, 99–100
Sumeru (mountain): boon of, 763
Sumitrā, 230, 238, 243, 473, 477, 488, 589, 590, 711, 712, 714, *passim*; and the death of Daśaratha, 201–2; consoles Kausalyā, 177; Daśaratha gives half of a half of porridge to, 70;—gives remaing porridge to, 70; departs for forest to bring Rāma back, 219; eats celestial porridge, 70; follows Kausalyā to heaven, 845; gives birth to two sons, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna, 71; instructs Lakṣmaṇa on conduct, 173; Kausalyā and, go to meet Rāma, 721; laments, 211; learns that Rāma will be consecrated as prince regent, 135–36; meets Bharadvāja, 230; meets with Rāma on Mount Citrakūṭa, 243–44; mother of Lakṣmaṇa, 22, 52, 71, 172, *passim*; Rāma respectfully salutes, 723, 725; receives new brides, 128; Śatrughna respectfully salutes, 811
sun: burns Saṃpāti's wings, 418; grows dim during battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, 697; Hanumān tries to devour, 426–27, 783; Jaṭāyus and Saṃpāt fly into, 418, 421–22; wings of Saṃpāti burned by, 418, 422. *See also* Sūrya
Śunaḥśepa: story of, 113–14
Sundarakāṇḍa, 429–536; *bīja* (heart) of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 15; printed separately from *Rāmāyaṇa*, 15; prognosticative text, 15; starting point for recitation of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 15; synopsis of, 14–15
Sundarī (wife of Mālyavān), 734
sun god. *See* Sūrya
Suparṇa: in Sagara story, 94. *See also* Garuḍa
Supārśva (*rākṣasa*): dissuades Rāvaṇa from killing Sītā, 674–75
Supārśva (vulture): Saṃpāti scolds, 423; son of Saṃpāti, 419, 420; witnesses abduction of Sītā, 420
Supreme Being. *See* Viṣṇu
Suptaghna (*rākṣasa*): fights Rāma, 581
Surabhi (Surabhī) (wish-fulfilling cow), 210, 228; children of, 280; grieves for her calves, 210–11; Rāvaṇa observes, 761; supplies milk for Ocean of Milk, 761
Surasā: Kadrū, sister of, 280–81; Krodhavaśā mother of, 280; mother of serpents, 380, 434, 519; obstructs Hanumān's passage, 434–35;—recalled, 519–20

Sūrasenā (city): Śatrughna renames Madhupurī as, 817
Śūrasenas: country in northern quarter, 404
Surāṣṭra, 402, 284–85
Śūrpaṇakhā, 12, 29, 32, 33; admonishes Rāvaṇa, 299–300; appeals to Rāvaṇa's duty as king, 299–300; attacks Sītā, 285; birth of, 28–29, 741; demands Rāma's death, 301; describes Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā to Rāvaṇa, 301; description of, 284, 741; goes to Laṅkā, 298; grief of, 288; inflames Rāvaṇa's passion for Sītā, 301; Kaikasī mother of, 29, 741; Lakṣmaṇa rejects and mutilates, 12, 285–86; lives in Daṇḍaka forest, 764–65; mutilation of, 32, 52, 56, 285–86;—explained to Khara, 286; Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa tease, 285; Rāvaṇa marries, to Vidyujjihva, 746; —questions, 300;—sends, to Daṇḍaka forest, 764;—kills husband of, 29, 763; reports death of Khara and Dūṣaṇa to Rāvaṇa, 52, 299; representations of, in Rāma story, 33; reproaches Rāvaṇa for death of husband, 763; role of, in epic, 33; seduces Lakṣmaṇa, 285;—Rāma, 12, 33, 284–85; taunts Khara taunted by, 288; tells Khara about death of fourteen rākṣasas, 288–89;—about Rāma killing *rākṣasas*, 288; tells Rāma about Khara and Dūṣaṇa, 284; Viśravas father of, 28–29, 741;—curses, 33, 741
Sūrya (sun god) (Āditya, Mārtāṇḍa, Vivasvant), 26, 36, 429, 432,569, 608, 630, 640, 698, 716, 735, 780 784; does not burn Hanumān, 432; father of Ṛkṣarajas, 346; father of Sugrīva, 27, 71, 355; grants boons to Hanumān, 432, 783, 786;—to Mount Sumeru, 403, 783; Hanumān invokes, 429; Hanumān mistakes for fruit, 783; lord of cows, 650; Rāhu chariot of, 784; refrains from burning Hanumān, 783; son of Kaśyapa, 251; weapon-spells of, 639, 685. *See also* sun
Sūryabhānu (*yakṣa*): disappears, pulverized, 750; pierces Rāvaṇa, 749
Sūryavaṃśa. *See* Solar Dynasty
Suṣeṇa (monkey), 440; member of the southern search party, 400, declares prowess in jumping, 424
Suṣeṇa (monkey troop leader; father of Tārā), 390, 563, 573; *passim*; arrival of in Kiṣkindhā, 397; battles and kills Vidyunmālin, 581–82; father of Tārā, 402, 580, 781; fights and kills Vidyunmālin, 581–82; has Lakṣmaṇa inhale aroma of the healing herbs, 27, 688; leader of western search party, 402, 404, 407, 409; physician of monkeys, 27; reassures Rāma that Lakṣmaṇa is not dead, 687; sends Hanumān once more for healing herbs, 688; tells monkeys about healing herbs on the mountains Candra and Droṇa, 592
sūtās (bards), 35
Sutīkṣṇa (ascetic): ashram of, 270, 274; auterities of, 270; directs Rāma, to Agastya and Agastya's brother, 275; Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Sītā visit, 52, 56, 269–71, 274–75; Śarabhaṅga directs Rāma to, 268
Suvela (mountain): Rāma encamps on, with chief monkeys, 574–76; Rāma's army encamps near, 563,–64
Suyajña (minister of Daśaratha), 64
Suyajña (son of Vasiṣṭha), 165–66, 725
Svayaṃprabhā: daughter of Merusāvarṇi, 412; description of, 411; fasting of, 412; friendship of, with Hemā, 412; Hanumān tells, of search party's adventures, 413; history of, 412; questions Hanumān, 412; rescues southern search party from cave, 413; southern search party seeks refuge with, 413
Śveta (king): abandons kingship, 824; Agastya gives celestial jewel to, 826; attains Brahmaloka, 825; austerities of, 825–26; condemned to eat his own corpse, 825–26; hunger and thirst of, in Brahmaloka, 825; story of, 824–26
Śveta (monkey): son of Sūrya, 564
Śvetākṣa (guardian elephant [*diggaja*]), 280
sword: Agastya gives, to Rāma, 278; story of ascetic and, 272
Syandikā (river), 181

synopsis: of *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, 12–13; of *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, 11–12; of *Bālakāṇḍa*, 9–11; of *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, 13–14; of *Sundarakāṇḍa*, 14–15; of *Uttarakāṇḍa*, 16–20; of *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, 15–16

taking on form at will. *See* shape-shifting
Takṣa (son of Bharata): consecration of, in Takṣaśīla, 846
Takṣaka: Rāvaṇa conquers, 299, 545;—abducts wife of, 299
Takṣaśīla (city): Bharata founds, 846–47
Tamasā (river), 179; ashram of Bharadvāja at, 54; citizens of Ayodhyā turn back at, 180; Rāma and Sītā spend first night in forest at, 179; Vālmīki's ashram on banks of, 54–55, 794
Tāmasa (weapon-spell), Rāvaṇa uses, against monkeys, 683; Viśvāmitra gives, to Rāma, 80
tāmasī (power of illusion), 764
Tapana (*rākṣasa*): Gaja fights and kills, 581
Tāra (monkey troop leader), 365, 390, 622, 411, 415, 787, 788; advises Vālin, 367, 374, 377; arrives in Kiṣkindhā, 397; exhorts monkeys, 373; father of Tārā, 781; fights and kills Kumbhahanu, 601; member of southern search party, 407, 409; minister of Vālin, 781; number of troops of, 397; participates in Vālin's funeral, 378; suggest monkeys return to cave, 414–15; tells Rāvaṇa that Vālin is gone, 781
Tārā (wife of Vālin) 372; accepts Lakṣmaṇa's advice, 393; chief queen of Vālin, 363; daughter of Suṣeṇa, 376; daughter-in-law of Suṣeṇa, 798; Sugrīva by, 392–93; duty of, toward Añgada, 375; fast of, abandoned, 377; fasting to death of, 375; foretells future, 376; gives blessings and *mantras* for Vālin, 368; grief of, 373–77, 379; Hanumān consoles 375; hears information from Añgada, 367; instructs Añgada, 377; lament for Vālin of, 374, 376–77, 379; protector of monkeys and apes, 375; reader of portents, 376; rejects Hanumān's advice, 375; Sugrīva covets, 384; Tāra as father of, 781;Vālin as source of information of, 392; Vālin rejects advice of, 367–68; as widow, 374, 377
Tāṭakā, 10, 32; Agastya curses, 32–33, 78; boon of, 78; originally a *yakṣa*, 33, 78; daughter of Suketu, 78; forest of, 77–78; Mārīca son of, 78; power of illusion of, 79; Rāma kills, 10, 79; wife of Sunda as *yakṣa*, 78
three-headed cobras, 75, 654
three-strides of Viṣṇu. *See* Viṣṇu: three strides of
time. *See* cosmic cycles; cosmic eras; cyclical time; Dvāpara Yuga; Kali Yuga; Kṛta Yuga; Tretā Yuga; *yuga*(*s*)
Timidhvaja (an *asura*, also called, Śambara): Daśaratha kills, 141; Indra fights, 141; Rāma kills son of, 177. *See also* Śambara
Tiṣya: name of a degenerate *yuga* that comes about when unrighteousness eclipses righteousness, 571. *See also* Kali Yuga
Tiṣya constellation, 517
trees, golden. *See* inauspicious omens: golden trees presage death
Tretā Yuga, 18, 22, 754, 821, 824; *Rāmāyaṇa* takes place in, 38
Trijaṭā (*rākṣasa* woman), 587; assures Sītā that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are alive, 589; dream of, 475–76; reassures Sītā, 589; warns *rākṣasa* women to placate Sītā, 476
Trijaṭa Gārgya (brahman): Rāma jokes with and gives cow to, 166
Trikūṭa (mountain) Lañkā located on, 437, 538, 575, 715, 735
Trikūṭa (mountain), 583; Hanumān leaps onto, 437, 645; located on southern shore, 734; Rāvaṇa goes to, 745. *See also* Lamba
Trimūrdhan. *See* Triśiras (2)
Trimūrti, 34–35
Triśañku: becomes *caṇḍāla*, 110–11; as constellation, 174, 541; curse of, 41; descendant of Ikṣvāku, 109; goes to heaven in bodily form, 122, 252; son of Pṛthu, 122, 252; story of his rise to heaven,

109–12; Vasiṣṭha purohita of, 109–10; Vasiṣṭha and sons refuses to sacrifice for, 109–10; Viśvāmitra performs sacrifice for, 111–12
Triśiras (*rākṣasa* troop leader) (1): attacks Rāma, 294; fights Rāma in Daṇḍaka, 291; Rāma fights and kills, 32, 52, 56, 294–95;—recalled, 300, 652, 677; Rāvaṇa reports death of, to Mārīca, 303; vows to kill Rāma, 294
Triśiras (*rākṣasa* troop leader) (2): also called Trimūrdhan, 633–34; exhorts Rāvaṇa, 629; fights Añgada, 633; Hanumān fights and kills, 634–35; killing of, recalled, 640, 715; Kumbhakarṇa paternal uncle of, 628; leads *rākṣasas* into battle, 629–30; son of Rāvaṇa, 630; strikes Hanumān with sword, 634; vows to kill Rāvaṇa's enemies, 629
Tṛṇabindu, ashram of, 729–30; austerities of, 729; daughter of (*see* Tṛṇabindu's daughter); recognizes curse of Pulastya, 730
Tṛṇabindu's daughter: becomes pregnant, 729; gives birth to Viśravas, 730; Pulastya marries, 730; virtues of of, 30
truth-act: of Anaraṇya, 756; of Sītā, 19, 513–14, 843; of Vedavatī, 753. *See also* oath; vow
Tumburu (king of *gandharvas*), 228; Bharadvāja invokes, for hospitality to Bharata, 227; cursed by Vaiśravaṇa, 266–67; passion of, for Rambhā, 267
turtle: eating of, by brahmans and kshatriyas, 370
Tvaṣṭṛ (divine craftsman), 663; Bharadvāja invokes, for hospitality to Bharata, 227; Indra cuts off heads of son of, 635; Sudāmana divine weapon of, 80

Umā. *See* Pārvatī
umbrella: as a sign of sovereignty, 167, 178, 228, 249, 323, 337, 340, 353, 360–61, 457, 640; consecrated for *vājapeya*, 178, 853; white color of, as symbol of kingship, 131, 146, 148, 159, 302, 380, 395, 448, 463, 604, 722, 724, 725
universal destruction, fire of, 108, 116, 126, 388, 493, 504, 533, 606, 607, 624, 629, 637, 663,678, 698, 762, 816, 832. *See also* cosmic destruction
unrighteousness (*adharma*), 5, 17, 20, 37, *passim*
Upendra. *See* Viṣṇu
upodghāta (prologue) of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, 4, 6, 9–10, 51–58
Ūrmilā (*gandharva* woman), 85
Ūrmilā (wife of Lakṣmaṇa), Janaka gives, to Lakṣmaṇa, 123, 262; marriage of, 125; wives of Daśaratha welcome, 128
Urvaśī: Pururavas and, 319; story of, and Mitra and Varuṇa, 803–4
Uśanas Kāvya (Bhārgava, Śukra, Uśanas) (preceptor of the demons and constellation) 412, 415, 715; anger of 763; Arajā daughter of, 827–28; ashram of, 827–28; ashram surrounds of, become Janasthāna, 828; Bhārgava, 541, 805–6, 827–28; curses Daṇḍa, 828;—forest, 763;—curses Yayāti, 806, 807; Devayānī daughter of, 805–6; instructs dwellers in his ashram emigrate, 828; orders Arajā to remain near lake, 828; *purohita* of *asuras*, 599;—of Daṇḍa, 827;—of *rākṣasas*, 764; spares area around lake from destruction, 828; tells Rāvaṇa of Indrajit's sacrifices, 764; Viṣṇu kills mother of, 79; wealth of, 412
Utopian realm of "Rāmarājya", 726–27
utpiḍā (unidentified organ), 472
Uttarakāṇḍa, 728–855; anomalous events in, 17; Brahmā instructs to listen to (Uttara), 844; categories of narrative material in, 16; cautionary tales in, 17; controversial episodes of, 16, 19; epilogue, 16–17; narrative of childhood of Hanumān in, 16; *rājadharma* in, 16; reprise of *Rāmāyaṇa* theme, 17; role of Agastya in, 16–17, 19, 26, 29; synopsis of, 16–20; tells history of rākṣasas and Rāvaṇa, 16; two bards (Lava and Kuśa) recite, 844; unusual features of, 19

Vaidehī. *See* Sītā
Vaijayanta (city): Nimi founds, 802; south of Ayodhyā, 141
vaikhānasas (class of ascetics), 268, 302, 303, 400, 405
Vaiṣṇava form: of Rāma, 854
Vaiṣṇava Hindus, 5n, 34
vaiṣṇava sacrifice: of Indra, 775; of Indrajit, 764
Vaiṣṇava theology: *dāsyabhāva* in, 26
Vaiṣṇava theory: of *avatāras* (incarnations), 38
Vaiṣṇava tradition: *Rāmāyaṇa*, as sacred text of, 4–5
Vaiṣṇava works, 35
Vaiśravaṇa. *See* Kubera Vaiśravaṇa
vaiśya (social class), 40, 54, 60, 199, 822; born from the thighs of Manu, 280; in list of four social classes, 65, 219, 240, 280, 821, 842; role of, in the *yugas*, 821
Vaitaraṇī (river): river of hell, 325
Vaivasvata (god of death), 111, 200–201, 321, 370, 376, 416, 475, 485, 604, 608, 640, 673, 820, 823; monkeys as sons of, 404;—Gaja, Gavākṣa, Gavaya, Śarabha, Gandhamādana, 564; Nārada goes to heaven with, 760; Rāvaṇa fights, 757–60; —recalled. 613; Rāvaṇa kills warriors of, 758; Rāvaṇa resolved to kill, 757; servants of, 644; son of Sūrya, 757. *See also* Dharmarāja; Kāla; Kṛtānta; Manu; Mṛtyu; Yama
vājapeya sacrifice, 178, 764, 845, 853; of Rāma, 726; umbrella consecrated for, 853
vajra (decoration), 440
vajra (thunderbolt of Indra), 71, 199, 210, *passim*; Hanumān invulnerable to, 786; Indra breaks Hanumān's jaw with, 426, 785;—cuts off mountains' wings with, 433, 519;—kills Vṛtra with, 832; —smashes Diti's fetus with, 99; —strikes Kumbhakarṇa with, 813
vajra (weapon), 80, 289, 441
Vajra (weapon-spell), 80, 108
Vajradaṃṣṭra (*rākṣasa*), 443, 546, 547; Rāma pierces, 583
Vajrajvālā: wife of Kumbhakarṇa and granddaughter of Vairocana, 746–47
Vajramuṣṭi (*rākṣasa*): son of Mālyavān 734; Mainda fights and kills, 581–82
vālakhilyas (class of ascetics), 104, 268, 302–3, 400
Vālin: abducts Sugrīva's wife, 361–62; acknowledges Rāma as having rightful royal authority, 26; adoptive son of Ṛkṣarajas, 786; alliance of, with Rāvaṇa, 26, 782; Añgada cremates, 379;—grieves death of, 379;—salutes, 377; Añgada son of (*see* Añgada); anger of, at Sugrīva, 360–61; apes seek protection of, 377; arrow in, pulled out by Nīla, 377; banishes Sugrīva, 13, 25, 345–46, 361; becomes like a brother to Rāvaṇa, 782; begs forgiveness from Rāma, 372; captures Rāvaṇa, 26, 781–82; challenges Dundubhi to fight, 362–63; character synopsis of, 25–26; chases Sugrīva around the entire earth, 408; confesses sins, 372, 375; cremation of, 375, 378–79; death of, 368–76; death of, as punishment, 371–72; description of, by Sugrīva, 362; discourse of, on righteousness and statecraft, 369–70; elder brother and rightful heir, 26, 353, 360; enmity of, with Māyāvin, son of Dundubhi, 360–61;—with Sugrīva of, 13, 26, 355–363, 408, 787; exiles Sugrīva, 11, 25, 361; fights and kills Dundubhi Mayāvin, 360–63;—recalled, 408; fights Sugrīva, 13, 25 53, 56, 364, 368; flies to four oceans with Rāvaṇa in armpit, 26, 782; freed from sin by punishment, 372; funerary libations for, by Sugrīva, 360; funerary rites, of, 378–79; gives Sūgrīva golden garland, 376;—sovereignty of monkeys, 376; golden necklace of, 368–69; —Indra gives, 363; golden garland of, 376, 781; Himālaya tells, Dundubhi is fit opponent, 636; hurls Dundubhi's body a league away, 363; instructions of, at death, to Añgada, 376; killing of, by Rāma unjust, 370;—controversial, 14, 20, 26;—Rāma justifies, 370–72; kills Dundubhi, 360–61; Kabandha tells Rāma about, 345–46; Matañga curses, 363–64; —recalled, 408; monkeys seek protection of, 377; more

powerful than Sugrīva, 26, 359; orders Sugrīva to wait at cavern, 360–61; Rāma consoles, 372; Rāma fails to shoot, 364;—kills, 21, 26, 53, 56, 368, 418, 460, 511;—shoots, from ambush, 13, 25, 56, 364, 368;—vows to kill, 13, 25, 53, 359, 361–62, 486; Rāvaṇa attacks and is defeated by, 16, 26, 27, 30, 781–82; —chases after, 481–82; rebukes Rāma for killing, 26, 369–70; reconciles with Sugrīva, 375; rejects Tārā's advice, 367–68; Ṛkṣarajas adoptive father of, 346, 786; —makes, king of monkeys, 786; routs Sugrīva, 364; Rumā, daughter-in-law of, 371; *sandhyā* rites of, 781–82; slayer of *dānavas*, 373; source of Tārā's information, 392; scatters blood on Matañga's ashram, 363; Sugrīva blocks, in cave, 360, 361, 408;—fears, 346, 349, 353, 359, 361;—makes alliance with Rāma to kill, 13, 25, 30, 53, 56, 356–58, 364, 486, 716;—mistreats, 354;—narrates history of conflict with, 13, 53, 358–61; —returns kingdom to, 361;—younger brother of, 353; takes Sugrīva's wife, 25, 359, 361; travels the world in fear of, 361; Tāra minister of, 731; Tārā laments for, 374, 376–77, 379;—says blessings and *mantras* for, 368;—wife of, 372; son of Indra, 71, 345, 368; violator of righteousness, 370–71; wives lament for, 374–75

Vālmīki, *passim*; agrees to Rāma's request to have Sītā publicly prove her innocence, 841; ascetic, 51, 842; ashram of, 6, 7, 10, 13, 17–19, 32, 38, 40, 794–98, 800, 812–14, 818–19; asks Nārada if there is a truly great man in the world, 9, 51; austerities of, 797, 842; author of *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3; Bharadvāja as disciple of, 54–55; birthday of, restricted holiday, 5; Brahmā grants poetic inspiration to, 4, 9, 39, 55; —instructs, to compose *Rāmāyaṇa*, 55; —praises composition of, 844; visits, 9, 55; brings Sītā to Rāma's *aśvamedha*, 841–42; composes *Rāmāyaṇa*, 6, 9–10, 55–57, 855; consoles Sītā, 798; contemporary with epic characters and actor in epic drama, 38; creates *śloka* (poetry), 9, 55–56; curses hunter (Niṣāda) in metrical form, 9, 54–55; disciples (bards) of, sing the *Uttara*(*kāṇḍā*), 845; —identify, as author of the poem, 841; —recite *Rāmāyaṇa*, 57–58, 839–41, 844; —recite *śloka*, 55;—Rāma acknowledges as sons, 842;—Rāma recognizes, as Sītā's sons, 841 (*see also* Kuśa; Lava); endowed with divine vision, 39; filled with pity at killing of *krauñca* bird, 54; First Poet (Ādikavi), 4; gives amulets to Lava and Kuśa, 813; grief (*śoka*) of, becomes metrical and musical verse (*śloka*), 55; hears story of Rāma from Nārada, 9, 51–54; ignorant of Rāma story prior to Nārada's visit, 38; instructs disciples to perform *Rāmāyaṇa*, 839–40; metrical structure of curse of, 54–55; names Lava and Kuśa, 813; Nārada narrates synopsis of *Rāmāyaṇa* to, 51–54; portrays Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, and Sītā as ideal role models, 20, 22–23; proclaims Sītā's innocence, 797; Rāma instructs Lakṣmaṇa to abandon Sītā at ashram of, 794, 796, 800;—requests, to have the *Uttara* (*kāṇḍa*) performed, 844; Śatrughna stays over at ashram of, 18, 812, 818; sends disciples to recite *Rāmāyaṇa*, 839–42; shelters Sītā, 17, 797–98; son of Pracetas (Prācetasa), 840, 842; sons of Sītā and Rāma born in ashram of, 18, 813; suggests but does not explicitly describe Rāvaṇa as devotee of Śiva, 30; teaches Rāmāyaṇa to Lava and Kuśa, his disciples, 6, 10, 57 (*see also* Kuśa; Lava; Vālmīki: disciples (bards) of, sing the *Uttara*(*kāṇḍā*)); tells story of Mitrasaha Saudāsa, 812–13; testifies to legitimacy of Rāma and Sītā's twin sons, 842; testifies to Sītā's innocence, 842; witnesses killing of *krauñca*, 54; world of, 34

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: alternative titles of, 3; Brahmā asks Rāma to hear, 844; cautionary tales in, 17, 18, 24, 41; characters of, animals, 24–25;—Bharata, 23;—construct of binary, 20;—Daśaratha, 23; —Hanumān, 26–27;—Indrajit, 31–32;—Kaikeyī, 24; —Kausalyā, 23–24;—Kumbhakarṇa, 31; —Lakṣmaṇa, 22;—*rākṣasa* women, 32–34; —Rāma, 20–21;—Rāvaṇa, 28–30;—as role models, 5;—Śatrughna, 23;—Sītā, 21–22;—Sugrīva, 25;—Vālin, 25–26; —Vibhīṣaṇa, 30–31; contested history of, 19; dating of, 3, 8, 34, 38; editions of, 7; emic hitory of, 34, 37–40; etic history of, 34; general overview of, 3–6; histories of, 34–41; as history, 5, 34–41, 37; history of, contested, 19;—differing perspectives of, 34; as literature poetic composition, 4, 41, 47; as literature, the First Poem (Ādikāvya), 4; *Mahābhārata* and, as sister epics, 47;—comparison between, 20; manuscripts, sub-recensions of, 7; moral and ethical, *dharmaśāstra* and—struggle between *dharma* and *adharma*, 5, 20; narrative of, 8–9; recensions of, 7–9, 40, 44, 45; recitation of, 4, 6, 10, 17, 19, 57–58, 839–41,

844;—by disciples (bards), 839–41;—by Lava and Kuśa, 57–58, 844; —*parāyaṇa* (recitation), 15; —Śatrughna hears, 818–19;—*Sundarakāṇḍa* as starting point for, 15;—Vālmīki teaches to disciples, 6, 10;—versification of, 8; religious history of, 4–5, 34–35, 41; social vision of, 40–41; story of, 9–20; structure, *upodghāta* of, 4, 6, 9–10, 51–58; structure of, meta-narrative of, 4;—meters of, 8–9; —*Sundarakāṇḍa* as *bīja* (heart) of, 15; —*Uttarakāṇḍa* as reprise of, 17; synopsis of, by Nārada, 51–54; text, history of, 4, 8, 44; structure of, 8–9; text of, 6–9; —Baroda critical edition of, 6, 8;—books (*kāṇḍas*) of, 9;—size of, 3; textual tradition of, manuscripts of, 7–8;—perishability of manuscripts of, 7; themes and motifs of, 19, 24–26;—curse as, 16; discomfort, 19; titles of, 3–4; translation(s) of, based on various editions, 7;—conventions in, 45–47;—history of current, 44–45; —Princeton University Press, 6; worshiped by Brahmā, 855. See also *Rāmāyaṇa*
Vāmadeva (minister of Daśaratha), 64
Vāmadeva (priest of Daśaratha), 60, 120, 203, 255; Daśaratha instructs, to install Rāma as prince regent, 133
Vāmadeva (priest of Rāma), 725, 820–21, 837, 841
Vāmanā (*apsaras*), 228
Vāmana (guardian elephant [*diggaja*]), 60, 776
Vāmana (sage), 841
vāmanāvatāra (dwarf incarnation) of Viṣṇu, 81–82
vaṃśa(*s*) (royal lineage[s]), 35
vaṃśāvali(*s*) (dynastic list[s]), 36
vānaras. *See* monkeys
Varāha (mountain): city of Prāgjyotiṣa located on, 403
varṇa(*s*): *See* social classes
Varuṇa: and the *apsaras* Urvaśī, 803–4; becomes a *haṃsa*, 754; grants boon to *haṃsa*, 755;—to Hanumān, 786; goes tomusical recital 762; Mahodara battles, and sons, 762; Rāma compared to, 304, 321; Rāma gives Viṣṇu's bow to, 128; Rāvaṇa battles sons and grandsons of, 761; refused sex by Urvaśī, 803–4; regent of northern quarter, 402 ;regent of western quarter, 402, 407; releases semen into pot, 804; story of Urvaśī and Mitra and, 803–4; Vasiṣṭha enters semen of Mitra and, 803; as world guardian, 731, 804
Vāsava. *See* Indra
Vasiṣṭha: accompanies Daśaratha to Mithilā for weddings, 120; addressed by brahmans upon Daśaratha's death, 203; among few who remain conscious in presence of Rāma Jāmadagnya, 126; ashram of, 104, 798–99; authority in matters of kingship, 217; befriends Viśvāmitra, 105, 117; born from pot of semen, 804; brahman ascetic, 799; brings queen mothers to reunion of sons, 244; consecrates Rāma along with other brahmans, 725; curses Mitrasaha, 813; —Nimi to be disembodied, 803; —Viśvāmitra, 108; Daśaratha instructs, to install Rāma as prince regent, 133; dispatches messengers to Rājagṛha, 204; Durvāsas prophesies in ashram of, 798; enters semen of Mitra and Varuṇa, 803; explains origin of the world and lineage of Ikṣvākus, 251; enmity with Viśvāmitra, 11, 103–17; forces of, battle forces of Viśvāmitra, 106–7; gods propitiate, 117; grants permission for Daśaratha to go personally to Ṛśyaśṛṅga, 63; Ikṣvāku chooses, as *purohita* at birth, 804; informs Rāma of his impending consecration, 136; instructs Bharata to perform Daśaratha's funerary rites, 213;—Rāma and Sītā prior to the consecration, 136;—Śabalā to produce elegant feast for Viśvāmitra and his army, 105; interprets omens, 125–26; leads brahmans in approving Daśaratha's *aśvamedha*, 64;—the court and *gurus* to Nandigrāma, 257; limits curse of Mitrasaha, 813; names Daśaratha's sons, 7l; Nimi chooses, to perform sacrifice, 802;—curses, to be disembodied in return, 893; one of the seven seers, 728; orders arrangements for Daśaratha's *aśvamedha*, 65–66;—Śabalā to produce army, 106; performs ceremony of the wedding thread, 124; —naming ceremony for Daśaratha's four sons, 71;—Rāma's rite of departure (*mahāprasthana*),

853; *purohita* of Bharata, 203–6, 209, 212–14, 218–19, 225–26, 231, 235–36, 239, 243–44, 228, 238, 244, 248, 251, 253, 255, 257, 725;—of Daśaratha, 52, 60, 62–66, 68, 71–73, 75, 120–26, 133, 136–37, 339, 798–99;—of Ikṣvāku, 121, 804;—of the Ikṣvākus, 64, 75, 135, 203, 214;—of Mitrasaha, 812–13;—of Rāma,723–25, 810–11, 820–21, 837, 841, 850–51, 853; —of Triśaṅku, 109–10, 541; *rākṣasa* in guise of cook, offers, human flesh, 813; *rākṣasa* in the form of, demands meat, 812; rebuffs Triśaṅku, 109; receives new body, 804; recites genealogy of the solar dynasty, 251–52;—lineage of Daśaratha to Janaka, 121–22; refuses to give up Śabalā, 105; reminds Daśaratha of necessity of honoring promise to Viśvāmitra, 75; renders useless weapon-spells of Viśvāmitra, 10, 108; requests new body from Brahmā, 803; Śabala as wish-fulfilling cow of, 105–6; sends messengers to bring Bharata and Śatrughna back to Ayodhyā, 204; son of Brahmā, 802–3; sons of, curse Triśaṅku, 110;—rebuff Triśaṅku, 109; tells Rāma not to displease subjects, 851; Triśaṅku approaches sons of, 109;—appeals to sons of, 109;—asks, to perform a sacrifice, 109; urges Bharata to accept kingship, 52, 209, 218;—Bharata to undergo consecration, 218;—execution of Lakṣmaṇa, 850;—Rāma to accept kingship, 252–53; visits ashram of Bharadvāja, 225–26; Viśvāmitra demands that, address him as “brahman.” 117; —destroys ashram of, 107;—tries to take wish-fulfilling cow of, by force, 106; —tries to trade for Śabalā, 105–6; welcomes Viśvāmitra, 104

Vasu: founder of Girivraja, 84; Nṛga consecrates, 801; son of Kuśa, 84

Vasudā (*gandharva* woman): wife of Mālin, 734

Vāsudeva. *See* Viṣṇu

Vasudhā (earth goddess), 734; Rāma rages against, 843. *See also* Dharaṇī; Mādhavī

Vāsuki (serpent lord), 594, 690; dwells in Bhogavatī, 299, 401, 760; gods and demons use as rope for churning, 97; Rāvaṇa conquers, 299, 545, 760

Vasus (class of deities), 280, 316, 380, 403, 455, 481, 564, 709, 725, 768, 769, 770, 772, 842

Vātāpi: Agastya kills, 312; Agastya kills Ilvala and, 276; as demon ram, 275–76; and Ilvala kill brahmans, 275–76; story of, 275–76, 312

vat of oil: preservation of bodies in, 202, 822

Vāyu (god of wind) (Mātariśvan, Pavana), 46, 75, 525, *passim*; assists Hanumān in leapin of ocean, 432; blocks all creatures’ vital functions, 784; Brahmā and gods propitiate, 784–85; Brahmā and, in story of Hanumān’s birth, 784–85; deprives worlds of breaths, 785; divine father of Hanumān, 426, 783, *passim*; dwells in all beings, 84, 784; gives Rāma golden and pearl necklaces at Indra’s command, 725–26; friendship of, with Maināka, 519; gods propitiate, 426; Hanumān invokes, 429; Hanumān son of, *passim*; ordered to enter Śiva’s semen, 88; as *prāna*, 84–85; prostrates himself before Brahmā, 785; seduces and is rejected by Kuśanābha’s daughters, 84–85, weapon-spell of, called Prathama, 80; weapon-spells of, 627. *See also* Anila; Māruta

vedas, 39, 57, 59, *passim*; according, Manu bore brahmans, kshatriyas, *viaśyas*, and *śūdras*, 280; bow of Śiva consist of, 646; Brahmā primordial knower of, 785; Janaka well-versed in, 65; *rākṣasa* brahmans know, 463; Rāma well-versed in, 51, 72, 482, 484, 561; is ordances of, 709; *Rāmāyaṇa* is equal to, 54; Ṛśyaṛṅga learned in, 68; social classes first alluded to in, 40; Sumālin, Mālyavān, and Mālin learned in, 736; take form of brahmans, 853; Tṛṇabindu’s daughter overhears recitation of, 730

Vedaśruti (river), 181

Vedavatī: ascends to heaven, 753; asceticism of, 752–53; birth of, 753; enters the sacrificial fire, 753; Rāvaṇa seduces, 753; reborn as Sītā, 753; Sītā as reincarnation of, 21, 753–54; story of, 752–54; truth–act of, 16, 753

vedic gods: incarnate themselves as monkeys, 10, 70–71; plead with Viṣṇu to incarnate, 10, 68–69. *See also* gods

verbal abuse of Sītā by Rāma, 15

verse: *śloka* type of, 8, 39, 55, 391
Vibhāṇḍaka (son of Kāsyapa, father of Ṛśyaśṛñga), 61–62
Vibhīṣaṇa (brother of Rāvaṇa), 15, 24, 26, *passim*; accompanies Rāma to Ayodhyā, 715–17; advises against hostilities, 547–548;—Rāma to prepare army to fight Kumbhakarṇa, 614;—Rāma to solicit aid of Samudra, 553;—Rāvaṇa to return Sītā, 547–48; alliance of with Rāma, 5, 15, 56, 551–52, 702; alone can see invisible Indrajit, 585; Anala minister of, 573; Analā eldest daughter of, 489; anointed as *de jure* king of the *rākṣasas*, 552, 561; as anomalous *rākṣasa*, 5, 284; assures monkeys that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are still alive, 591; austerities of 742, 765, 742; balks at performing funerary rites for Rāvaṇa, 702; begs righteousness as boon from Brahmā, 743 ; birth of, 28–29, 741; boards the Puṣpaka with his ministers, 715; boons of, 743; Brahmā grants, immortality, 743; brings Sītā to Rāma, 705–6; brother of Rāvaṇa, 24, 31, 489, 548, 664, 667, 741, *passim*; cannot kill Indrajit, 668; character synopsis of, 30–31; consecration of, as king of Lañkā, 15, 53, 553, 702–3; consoles *rākṣasa* women 702; conveys Rāma's instruction to Sītā, 705; declares the killing of Sītā to be illusion, 660; defects to Rāma's camp, 15, 549, 578; denied permission to follow Rāma to heavenly world, 31, 553; dissuades Rāvaṇa from executing Hanumān, 512–13; distraught at sight of bodies of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 591; does not deviate from righteousness, 742; enters inner apartments of Rāvaṇa to find Sītā, 705; expects unconscious Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, to revive, 586; expresses concern to Rāvaṇa, 764; fights Mitraghna, 581; fraternal conflict of, with Rāvaṇa, 26; Hanumān and Sugrīva question, about means of crossing ocean, 552–53; Hanumān and, find Jāmbavān among dead and wounded, 643; has Sītā mount palanquin, 705; holds a fly-whisk at consecration of Rāma, 724–25; honors monkeys with gifts, 714–15; identifies *rākṣasa* warriors for Rāma, 603–4; Indrajit pierces with a hundred arrows, 666;—reviles, as a traitor, 664;—shoots with five arrows, 669; informs Rāvaṇa of abduction of Kumbhīnasī (2), 765; invites Rāma to stay in Lañkā, 713; Jāmbavān asks, why, inquires only about Hanumān, 643; justifies his abandonment of Rāvaṇa, 664; Kaikasī mother of, 741; kills Rāvaṇa's chariot horses, 686; Lakṣmaṇa intervenes to save, 686; marries Saramā, 747; as metaphor for treason, 31; ministers of, gather intelligence on Lañkā and its forces, 573;—. taking form at will as birds, 18, 573; monkeys debate whether to trust, capture, or kill, 549–51;—mistaking, for Indrajit, flee, 590–91; narrates the history of Kumbhakarṇa, 613; offers Rāma bath and ointments, 713;—Rāma the use of the Puṣpaka, 56, 713; one of seven immortals (*cirajīvins*), 31, 742; only virtuous child of Kaikasī, 30, 741; orders area of Sītā's passage cleared of moneys, apes and *rākṣasas*,705–6;—Sītā come in full view of the public, 706; paragon of virtue through devotion to Viṣṇu, 30; performs funerary rites for Rāvaṇa, 702; points out banyan tree where Indrajit performs sacrifices, 663–64; points out Indrajit's sacrificial ground to Lakṣmaṇa, 664–65; Praghasa minister of, 573; prevents execution of Hanumān, 512, 523; questions wounded Jāmbavān, 643; rallies monkey army, 586, 590; Rāma accepts gifts from, 703;—declines hospitality of, 714;—gives gifts to, 788;—grants refuge to, and ministers, 551–52; —honors, 575;—instructs, to perform funerary rites for Rāvaṇa, 30, 701–2;—orders Lakṣmaṇa to anoint, as king of *rākṣasas*, 553;—orders to bring Sītā, 705;—orders to rule Lañkā, 789, 853;—reproaches for clearing area of spectators, 706;—summons, to *aśvamedha*, 838;—tells, he will live on as lord of the *rākṣasas*, 853; Rāvaṇa excoriates as traitor, 31, 548;—falsely tells Sītā that, was captured, 565;—regrets not heeding advice of, 629;—regrets treatment of, 629; reassures Rāma that Sītā cannot have been killed, 660;—Sugrīva and monkeys, 642; rebukes Rāvaṇa, 548, 764; rejoices at death of Indrajit, 671; reports the death of Indrajit to Rāma, 672;—to Rāma on Lañkā's defensive preparations and forces, 31, 573, 603; reviles Indrajit, 664–65; as righteous advisor of Rāvaṇa, 305; as righteous *rākṣasa*, 5, 30, 284, 512, 742, 765; roams the gory battlefield with Hanumān at night, 642–43; Saṃpāti minister of, 573; Śarabha minister of, 573; Saramā wife of, 747; says Indrajit will become visible once his army is annihilated, 662;—sacrifice affords Indrajit his invisibility, 660–61; sends ministers to spy on Rāvaṇa's defensive arrangements, 573;

slaughters *rākṣasas* with arrows, 667–68; speaks truth to power, 30; stationed at central encampment, 574; stations monkeys at gates of Laṅkā, 577; suggests telling frightened monkeys that Kumbhakarṇa is a mechanical man, 614; Sugrīva reassures, 591; Suṣeṇa heals, of wounds, 672; takes refuge (*śaraṇam*) with Rāma, 31, 549, 551–52; tells despondent monkeys that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are not dead, 642; —Lakṣmaṇa he must stop Indrajit from completing his sacrifice, 660, 664; —monkeys that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are still alive, 586; tells Rāma about Atikāya, 636;—Rāma of Kumbhakarṇa's history and Brahmā's curse, 613–614;—Rāvaṇa of abduction of Kumbhīnasī, 764;—Sītā to do exactly as Rāma says, 70;—Sītā to do exactly as Rāma says, 705; as traitor, 31, 548, 664; unmasks Śuka and Sāraṇa, 556, 562; urges Lakṣmaṇa to attack Indrajit before his sacrifice is completed, 662; —Lakṣmaṇa to kill Indrajit, 666, 668; —on monkeys, 668;—Rāma to abandon grief, 660;—Rāma to send Lakṣmaṇa to kill Indrajit, 660–61;—Rāvaṇa to return Sītā, 489, 547–49, 660; Viśravas exempts, from curse, 29. 741; Viśravas father of, 28–29, 741; vows to help kill the *rākṣasas* and assault Laṅkā, 552; warns Rāvaṇa of his impending death at Lakṣmaṇa's hands, 664–65; weeps for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 591; wishes to attend Rāma's consecration, 715

Vidhātṛ (the arranger), 158, 278

Vidyujjihva (*dānava*), 29, 33, 746; power of illusion of, 564; produces simulacra of Rāma's head and bow, 564–68; Rāvaṇa kills, 29, 763; Rāvaṇa marries Śūrpaṇakhā to, 746

Vidyunmālin: Suṣeṇa fights and kills, 581–82

Vidyutkeśa: birth of, 732; Sālakaṭaṅkaṭā wife of, 732

Vijaya (minister of Daśaratha), 60, 204

Vinata (monkey): leader of eastern search party, 398, 407; failure of, to find Sītā, 409

Vinatā (1): mother of Garuḍa and Aruṇa, 280–81 sons of, go by highest path in sky, 419

Vinatā (2) (*rākṣasa* woman): taunts Sītā, 471

Vindhyā (mountain[s]), 394; Hanumān swears by, 489; obeys Agastya, 276; Saṃpāti falls to, 422

violence: Sītā warns Rāma to abjure, 271–72

Virādha (*dāṇava* or *rākṣasa*), 627; abducts Sītā, 12, 265–67; asks Rāma to bury in grave, 267; boon of, from Brahmā, 266; burial of, 267;—recalled, 719; Kubera Vaiśravaṇa curses, 32, 266–67; parentage of, 266 (*see also* Jaya; Śatahradā); Lakṣmaṇa breaks right arm of, 266; Rāma breaks right arm of, 266; Rāma kills and frees from curse, 52, 266–67;—recalled, 719; Rāma kills recalled, 460, 474, 564, 677, 697, 716, 719; story of 265–67

Virgil, 3

Virocana: Mantharā daughter of, 79; Mṛtyu vows to kill, 759

Virūpākṣa (field marshal of Rāvaṇa), 443; Hanumān fights and kills, 502–3

Virūpākṣa (minister of Rāvaṇa), 729, 744, 769; son of Mālyavāṇ, 734

Virūpākṣa (one of the elephants who support the earth), 92

Virūpākṣa (*rākṣasa* hero), 683, 715, 728; Rāvaṇa sends forth to battle, 678; Sugrīva fights and kills, 680–81

Virūpākṣa (son of Rāvaṇa), 547; Lakṣmaṇa fights and kills, 581; Rāvaṇa stations in central camp, 572, 573

Viśālā (city), 97, 99, 103

Viṣṇu (Govinda, Hari, Hṛśīkeśa, Janārdana, Keśava, Madhusūdana, Narāyaṇa, Upendra, Vāsudeva) : Agastya gives Rāma bow of, 278; agrees to gods' plea to incarnate, 10; arrow is primordial body of, 817; asks Brahmā to grant heavenly worlds to devotees, 854;—gods the means of killing Rāvaṇa, 69; battles *rākṣasas* (Hari), 737–38, 740;—Śiva, 127; Bharata as one quarter of, 71; bound by ties of affection to Vṛtra, 831; bow of, 126–28, 278, 295–96; Brahmā calls Rāma, 844, 849, 854; —exhorts Rāma to recall his nature as, 844;—exhorts to return with brothers to essential Vaiṣṇava form, 854;—instructs gods to take on various forms to aid, 70;—reveals to Rāma that he is, in his manifold forms, 709–10; Buddha as *avatāra* (incarnation) of, 21; chooses Daśaratha as father, 69;

conch of, 403, 735, 737–40; creates Brahma, 849;—Madhu and Kaiṭabha, 849; curse of Nṛga to end at arrival of, in Kṛṣṇa incarnation (Vāsudeva), 801; declines to kill Vṛtra, 831; discus of, 299, 403; as divinity of Hinduism, 4; divine arrow of, 127–28, 810, 817; drives *rākṣasas* from Laṅkā, 732; dwarf incarnation of, 81–82; essence of, divided between Daśaratha's sons, 70–71; fights and kills Mālin, 738–39; gods appeal to, for means of reviving Indra, 832;—ask, to kill sons of Sukeśa, 735;—perform *aśvamedha* to, for Indra, 833; plead with, to incarnate, 10, 68–69; —request, to end incarnation, 19;—set task for, to take fourfold incarnation to destroy Rāvaṇa, 69;—worship Lakṣmaṇa as fourth part of, 851; history of discus of, 403; horn bow of, 737–38; ignorant of his own divine nature, 10; *avatāra* (incarnation) of, to kill Rāvaṇa, 10; Indra appeals to, to kill Vṛtra, 831;—requests, to kill Rāvaṇa, 768; intended husband of Vedavatī, 753; javelin of Mālyavān pierces, 740; judged greater than Śiva, 127; Kāla as son of, 849–50; Kausalyā meditates on, 135 (Janārdana);—worships, 152; Kausalyā meditates on, 135; kills Bhṛgu's wife, 79;—*dānava* Hayagrīva on Cakravān, 403;—Pañcajana on Cakravān, 403;—Mālin (Hari), 739; Kṛṣṇa as *avatāra* (incarnation) of, 35, 40; Lakmaṇa recalls he is an inconceivable portion of, 608;—returns to his state as quarter of, 851;—and Śatrughna infused with portions of, 71; Māyā is immemorial consort of, 854; Nārada's account of Rāma story makes no explicit reference to Rāma as *avatāra* (incarnation) of, 9; nature of, is to protect all beings, 849; paralyzes Śiva, 127; pierces Mālyavān with javelin (Govinda), 740; plans to divide himself into three parts, 831; pleading of vedic gods with, to incarnate, 10; Prahlāda *asura* devotee of, 30; as "preserver" in the Hindu "trinity," 34; promises to kill Rāvaṇa and son, 768;—to kill sons of Sukeśa (Janārdana), 735–36, *rākṣasas* abandon Laṅkā in fear of, 731, 740, 744; —believe Rāma is incarnation of, 571–72; Rāma as Hṛṣīkeśa, 709; as incarnation of, 4, 11;—as mighty as, 51;—as one-half of, 71;—enters with brothers into blazing energy of, 854;—glorifies, 137;—and Sītā sleep in sanctuary of, 137;—as slayer of Madhu (Madhusūdana), 128, 709; as Upendra, "younger brother of Indra", 709; Rāma Jāmadagnya (Paraśurāma) as *avatāra* (incarnation) of, 11, 21;—has bow of, 127;—recognizes Rāma as, 128; Rāvaṇa believes, not equal to him, 753; refuge of the worlds, 854; refuses to kill Rāvaṇa, 768;—Vṛtra, 831; sacrificial post of, 114; sets mind on human incarnation, 849; sets term of incarnation, 849; Śiva tells god to seek refuge with, 735; sleeping of (Keśava), 383; as Supreme Being, 400, 403; takes birth to slaughter *rākṣasas*, 740; three strides of, 400, 418, 424, 426–27, 468, 620; unlike most incarnations of, Rāma remains on earth for long time, 21; role of, in Sagara story (Vāsudeva), 92–93; Vibhīṣaṇa as one of few demon devotees of, 30; wishes to kill Rāvaṇa, 849; vows to kill *rākṣasas* (Hari), 736 yogic power of illusion of, 82

Viśravas (brahman sage): *agnihotra* rite of, 28, 741; birth of, 730; curses children, 28–29, 741;—Kaikasī, 29, 741; Devavarṇinī wife of, 730; exempts Vibhīṣaṇa from curse, 29; father of Kubera Vaiśravaṇa, 730;—of Kumbhakarṇa, 28–29, 740–41; —of Rāvaṇa, 28–29, 740–41; of Śūpaṇakhā, 741;—of Vibhīṣaṇa, 28–29, 740–41; Kaikasī wife of, 28; son of Pulastya, 28, 730; tells Kubera to abandon Lāñkā and found a city on Kailāsa, 745

Viśvācī (*gandharva* woman), 227

Viśvadevas, 158, 768, 842

viśvajit rite, 68

Viśvakarman: artisan of the gods, 734, 747; Bharadvaja invokes, for hospitality to Bharata, 227; builds dwelling for Kubera, 399, 405;—dwelling of Varuṇa on western mountain, 403;—Laṅka, 419, 437, 715, 731, 734;—palace for Agastya, 401;—palaces, 457;—residence for Garuḍa (Vainateya), 399;—sleeping chamber for Kumbhakarṇa 747;—creates ornament Agastya gives to Rāma, 824; fashions Puṣpaka, 446, 714, 770;—Viṣṇu's bow, 126, 278;—Viṣṇu's discus, 403; father of Nala, 15, 554; grants boon to Hanumān, 786;—to Nala, 554, 564; tells *rākṣasas* about Laṅkā, 734

Viśvaksena, 709

Viśvāmitra: acknowledged as a royal-seer, 109; ashram of, attacked by Mārīca, 32, 82–83;—recalled, 305; asks Daśaratha to send Rāma to kill *rākṣasas*, 10, 71–75, 305; attains preeminence among seers, 115;—worlds to which royal seers aspire, 109; attends Rāma's sacrifice, 841; austerities of, 107–17, 841; becomes a brahman-seer, 41, 103, 116–117;—recalled, 72; becomes a seer, 114; conflict of, with Vasiṣṭha, 104–17; creates new constellations, 112; curses Mahodaya and Vasiṣṭha's sons, 111;—own sons, 114;—Rambhā, 116–18; Daśaratha tries to go back on his word to, 73–74; Daśaratha's aid requested by, 305; departs from Mithilā, 125; enmity of, with Vasiṣṭha, 11, 103–17; enraged at Daśaratha's turnabout, 75; genealogy of, 103; Ghṛtācī seduces, 392; gives the Balā and Atibalā mantras to Rāma, 76;—*mantras* to Rāma, 76; —weapon-spells and recovery *mantras* for Kṛśāśvas to Rāma, 80–81; Indra urges, to confer the weapon-spells, sons of Kṛśāśva, 79; instructs Rāma to kill Tāṭakā, 78–79;—Rāma to save Ahalyā from Gautama's curse, 101; knows how to use divine weapon-spells (*astras*), 75; Lakṣmaṇa accompanies Rāma on journey with, 9, 75–102; Menakā infatuates 115; narrates history of Kāma's ashram and Śiva's burning of Kāma, 76–77;—history of Malada and Karuṣa and the story of Tāṭakā, 77–78;—stories of various places they pass through, 10, 56, 108;—story of churning of the ocean of milk for nectar of immortality(*amṛta*), and ensuing war between *daiteyas* and *ādityas*, 97–98; —story of Diti, Indra and the birth of the Mārutas, 97–99;—story of Indra, Gautama and Ahalyā, 100–101;—story of Kuśanābha's daughters and his own lineage, 84–86;—story of Lake Mānasa and the origin of the Sarayū river, 77;—story of the Ashram of the Perfected Being, 81–82;—story of the Dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu, 81–82;—story of the founding of Viśālā and the lineage of Sumati, 99; —story of the marriage of Śiva and Umā and the birth of Kārtikeya, 87–90;—story of the sons of Sagara, the digging of ocean, descent of the Ganges, 90–97; one of the seven seers, 728; performs sacrifice for Triśaṅku, 111–12; *purohitas* of, unnamed, 105; Rāma accompanies, to Mithilā, 10, 83;—defends sacrifice of, 10, 82–83; Rambhā seduces, 115–16; receives divine weapons from Śiva, 107; reports the reunion of Ahalyā and Gautama to Śatānanda, 103; as royal-seer,105;—recalled, 72; sacrifice(s) of, *rākṣasas* disrupt, 10, 73–74. 82–83; —lasts for ten nights, 73;—Rāma guards for six nights, 82; sets out with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 75; Śiva grants weapon-spells to, 107; son of Gādhi, 72, 104–5, 108; sons of, 107; story of career of, 11, 103–7; story of, and Menakā, 115; story of, and Rambhā, 116–18; story of, and Śunaḥśepa, 113–14; story of, and Triśaṅku 110, 111–12; takes Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Mithilā to see Janaka's bow, 10–11, 83–108, 118–19; weapon-spells of, divine weapons of, 108; Vasiṣṭha befriends, 117;—renders useless weapon-spells of, 10, 108; visits Daśaratha, 63–64
vital glow: as sign of life, 586, 589, 824
Viṭapāvatī (capital city of Kubera), 439, 650
Vivasvant. *See* Sūrya
vow: of Aṅgada to fast to death, 414, 416; of Añjanā, 426; of Bhagīratha, 95–96; of the Bhārgavas, 126; of Bharata, 224, 253, 383, 810; of Bhṛgu's wife, 79; of Daśaratha, 169, 719; of great sages, 77; of Hanumān, 853; of Indrajit, 640; of Janaka, 119–20; of Kākutsthas, 125; of Kausalyā, 152; of Kubera, 748; of Pārvatī, 87; of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, 186; of Rāma, 248, 283, 317, 335, 477, 484, 511, 552–553, 588, 689, 699, 703, 706, 711; of Rāma to slay Vālin, 359, 361; of Rāma and Sītā, 135; of Rāvaṇa, 591, 742, 773; of Satyavatī, 86; of Sītā, 705; of Śiva, 76 ; of Sugrīva, 416; of Vālmīki, 57; of Vasiṣṭha, 75, 106; of Vibhīṣaṇa, 742; of Viśvāmitra, 114, 116. *See also* oath; truth-act
Vṛtra, 736, 759, 768, 764, *passim*; *aśvamedha* sacrifice of, 832–33; austerities of, 831; Indra kills, with *vajra*, 831–32; story of Indra and, 830–32
vulture(s): fifth path in sky, that of, 419. *See also* Jaṭāyus; Saṃpāti

water-offerings: to ancestors, 76, 87, 241, 242, 283, 379, 419, 420; of Rāvaṇa, 758; known as *saṃvarta*, 846. *See also* funerary libations

weapon(s), 582, 584–85, 594, 601, 603, 647, 663, 675, 679, 685, 696; as a means of suicide, 454; of fourteen thousand *rākṣāsas*, 292–93; of monkeys, 525; of Rāma to kill golden deer, 312. *See also* arrow(s); bow(s); discus; javelin(s); lance(s); serpent-eapons; sword; *Glossary of Weapons*
weapon-spells (*astras*), 775; of Agni, 606, 639, 685, 689; of *asuras*, 685; of Brahmā, 482, 493, 523, 639, 641–42, 654, 655, 661; of *gandharvas*, 676, 685; of Garuḍa, 690; of gods, 689; of Indra, 628, 670; of Indrajit, 584, 764; known as *saṃvarta*, 846; of Paśupati (Śiva), 758; Rāma receives from Vivāmitra, 10; Rāvaṇa as master of, 738; of Rudra (Śiva), 626, 684; Saṃhāras know how to use, 75; of Śiva (Paśupati), 764; Śiva gives to Viśvāmitra, 107; sons of Kēśāśva as, 75; of Sūrya, 639, 685; thwart each other, 698; Vasiṣṭha renders useless, of Viśvāmitra, 108; of Vāyu, 627; of *vidyādharas* called Nandana, 80; Viśvāmitra gives, to Rāma, 10, 80–81;—knows how to use, 75; of Yama, 639
western quarter: description of, 402–4; dispatching of search party to, 402–4, 407; Suṣeṇa, leader of, search party, 400, 407
western search party: dispatching of, to western quarter, 402–4; failure of, to find Sītā, 409; Suṣeṇa as leader of, 400, 407
widow(s): Daśaratha's wives as, 245; exile of king leave earth, 183, 213, 222, 245; Kaikeyī must live as, 175, 244; Laṅkā to become a city of, 329, 474; *rākṣasa* women as, 676, 700; Sītā does not have the signs of, 588;—should not be, 588;—thinks she is, 566; Śūrpaṇakhā as, 33, 763; Tārā as, 374, 377; wives of Vālin as, 379; women abducted by women as, 762; women never become in Rāma's kingdom, 54, 727
wife/wives: commander of army as, 425; description of consorts of Rāvaṇa and, 29–30, 446–50; of Daśaratha, fasting of, 223;—reunited with him in heaven, 845; of Vālin lament, 374–75;—fast to death of, 375
wind: ceases to blow during battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, 697
wind god. *See* Vāyu
wine: *ādityas* accept, 98; *asuras* do not accept, 98; flower, 451; of the gods, 761; *madhu*, 390; *maireya*, 105, 227, 229, 390, 791
winter. *See* rainy season
woman/women: abducted by Rāvaṇa, 16, 29, 30; abducted by Rāvaṇa curse him, 763; asceticism of, 797 (*see also* Anasūyā; asceticism; austerities; Śabarī; Sītā; Svayaṃprabhā; Vedavatī); *dharma* of, 157–58, 161, 162–63, 172, 197, 109, 260; dress and anoint Sītā, 705; inner apartments of (*see* inner apartments); Laṅkā compared to, 437–38, 440; obedience of, to husbands, 158, 260; prohibition on killing, 215; propriety of, performing *sandhyā* rituals, 458; Rāvaṇa abducts, 62–63;in Vālmīki's ashram, 797. *See also* apsaras(es); *rākṣasa* women; Rāvaṇa: wives and courtesans of, described; *yakṣa* woman/women
women's quarters. *See* inner apartments
world guardian(s) (*lokapāla*[*s*]), 131, 156, 280, 725; Brahmā makes Kubera, 731; Indra as, 731; Kubera as, Rāvaṇa subjugates, 545; Rāvaṇa threatens to send to abode of Yama, 748; Varuṇa as, 731, 804

Yadu: and Yayāti, 805–7; son of Yayāti and Devayāni, 805; Yayāti curses to father *yātudhānas*, 807; Yayāti loves than Pūru, 805
yajña (sacrifice[s]), 40. *See also* sacrifice(s)
Yajñakopa (*rākṣasa*), 547; Rāma fights, 581; son of Mālyavān, 734
Yajñaśatru (*rākṣasa*), 291; Rāma strikes, 583
yakṣa(s), 68–69, 74–75, 78, *passim*; Brahmā creates, 732; creatures of the night, 87; etymology of word, 732; Kubera king of, 405; Kubera lives on Kailāsa surrounded by, 545; Rāvaṇa battles

Kubera Vaiśravaṇa and, on Kailāsa, 749–51; Viṣṇu tells gods to father sons on, 70. *See also* Māṇibhadra/Māṇicara; Saṃyodhakaṇṭaka; Suketu; Sūryabhānu
yakṣa woman/women, 734; Rāvaṇa abducts, 762–63 *See also* Tāṭakā
yak-tail fly whisks: as sign of kingship, 145, 148, 228, 267, 302, 323, 361, 380, 395, 448, 463, 509, 640, 722, 724, 725
Yama (god of death): becomes a crow, 754; Brahmā protects Rāvaṇa from, 760; grants boon to Hanumān, 786; king of ancestors, 757; Mṛtyu accompanies, in battle against Rāvaṇa, 759–60; must not falsify word of Brahmā, 760; Nārada warns of Rāvaṇa's intentions, 757–58; Rāvaṇa fights, 757–60; regent of southern quarter, 292, 403; rewards crow, 755; vanishes from Rāvaṇa's sight, 760; Vātāpi goes to house of, 276; vows to kill Rāvaṇa, 759–60; weapon-spells of, 639; as world guardian, 731. *See also* Dharmarāja; Kāla; Kṛtānta; Mṛtyu; Vaivasvata
Yamunā (river), 17, 18, 35, 146, 188, 206, 256, 398, 716, 718, 817, *passim*; Lavaṇa harasses sages who live near, 807–8; Rāma crosses, 190; Śatrughna camps on banks of, 814; Śatrughna. crosses, 815; water for Rāma's consecration brought from confluence of, with Ganges, 146
yātudhāna[*s*] (type of *rākṣasa*): Aṅgada allows, to capture him, 579; battle monkeys, 605, 625, 631; central encampment of Rāvaṇa garrisoned by, 539; described, 441–42; Khara has army of, 290, 292; engage in vedic recitation, 440; wake up Kumbhakaṛṇa, 610
Yavadvīpa (island), 399
Yavanas (peoples), 106; produced from wish-fulfilling cow, 107
Yavanas (region): located in northern quarter, 404
Yayāti: and Yadu, 805–7; consecrates Pūru, 807; curses Yadu to father *yātudhānas*, 807; Devayāni disfavored wife of, 805; enters ashram, 807; exchanges old age with son Pūru, 805–7; Indra and, 339; Pūru younger son of, 805–7; son of Nahuṣa, ascends to Indra's world, 339; story of 805–7; Uśanas Kāvya curses, 806, 807
Yogavasiṣṭhamahārāmāyaṇa, 41
younger brother: Lakṣmaṇa as ideal of, 5, 21
Yuddhakāṇḍa, 537–727; descriptions of battles in, 15; longest *kāṇḍa*, 15; synopsis of, 15–16
Yudhājit: army of, battles *gandharvas*, 846–47; Bharata's maternal uncle, 124, 206–7, 845–46; desires to conquer the country of the *gandharvas*, 845–46; dispatches Gārgya as messenger, 845–46; king of Kekaya and Bharata's maternal uncle, 130; son of king of Kekaya, 124; takes Bharata and Śatrughna to his home, 130
yuga(*s*): determined by the balance of righteousness and unrighteousness, 571; in Hinduism, 4, 32, 37–38; Nārada's account of, 821–22; theory of righteousness (*dharma*) in, 37–38, 821–22; Vedavatī born in Kṛta, 753–54; Vedavatī reborn as Sītā in Tretā, 753–54. *See also* Dvāpara Yuga; Kali Yuga; Kṛta Yuga; Tiṣya; Tretā Yuga
Yupākṣa (minister of Rāvaṇa): informs Kumbhakarṇa of the Laṅkā's siege, 612
Yūpākṣa (Rāvaṇa's field marshal): Hanumān fights and kills, 502–3
yuvarāja (heir-apparent/prince regent), 11, 46